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NB

★R. R. Bowker

WEDDING BELLS

AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY

NAT PRUNE

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PREFACE.

For many years the American people have been growing more reckless and more headstrong. It is the old law of mechanics that velocity is gained at the expense of power. Progress means death. Constant worry and steady application keep the nerves strung up to the highest tension; and the up-to-date man must have a stimulant in the morning and a narcotic at night. There is a universal demand for something that will at once ease the conscience, quiet the nerves and cause the heart to beat normally. Dictated only by motives of a philanthropic nature, I have urgently sought for this balm; and lo, I have found it. Here is such a remedy within reach of every man. I confidently predict that the day is not far distant when no home will be complete without this soul-satisfying chowder; municipalities will cause their patrolmen to be supplied with them; the theories of this modest little book will be taught in the schools throughout the country; and on

every desk in every Government office from Washington to San Francisco this compendium will repose in order that the clerks may have some pleasant occupation while waiting for the clock to strike four.

Therefore:

To all who suffer and are silent; who are weary and seek rest; who are troubled and desire peace; who are dull and covet inspiration; who have little and wish more; who love and are treated with indifference, this volume is dedicated.

Yours with very great concern,

NAT PRUNE.

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WEDDING BELLS.

WEDDING BELLS.

TALKIN' 'bout fun; I ain't had so much fun sence I ben a sinner as I did down at ol' Barney Squashes's weddin' in Jim Crack Holler 'bout eight year ago. Ol' Barney was one ov th' boys, an' he allus sed ef he *ever did* git married, he was goin' t' hev a bang-up time, an' lemme tell yuh, he didn' come fur from a-doin' ov it.

I'll tell yuh all 'bout it, jest as it happened. I got a monstr'us fine invitashun from Barney, sayin' 'twas comin' off, an' urgin' me t' come over, but I warn't a-goin' alone, an' thar warn't but one critter in th' worl' I cared t' take 'long with me, an' that was Tobe Punkin. Tobe sed he'd go. I know'd that, though, 'fore I ever ast him.

We got ready an' started; 'twas a long ja'nt; nigh ontuh thirty-fo' miles, but me an' Tobe was

young an' hearty then, an' warn't a-mindin' them long ja'nts. When we reached th' house we foun' they was fixin' t' hev a mos' powful time over thar. Th' bride, we larn't, was a Miss Jerusha Skimps, an' she warn't quite twenty year ol', but was th' belle ov Jim Crack Holler. Th' room was all decorated with cheese cloth an' holly berries an' red peppers, an' all over th' walls was pictures ov all th' Squashes from ol' one-eyed Reuben clean down t' Barney.

Thar warn't no seein' ov Barney, though; he had ben dressin' every sence daybreak. Relatives was thar from fur an' near; an' all th' nabors, includin' in ov th' small fry. Th' ol' uns was a-settin' 'roun' on cheers an' benches an' saw-bucks, an' th' young uns was a-packed away in th' cracks an' cornders whar thar warn't room fuh nobody else. An' while th' multytood waited fuh th' bridle party t' come in, they 'mused the'r-selves in varyus ways—th' wimmin knitted an' gossiped an' talked 'bout the'r nabors; th' men chawed an' spit an' discussed th' craps; an' th' little uns made noise an' swapped Barlows an' ast questions an' played leap-frog, an' made the'r-selves giner'lly troublesome.

Thar was a big flatform in one end ov th' room that th' cermony was t' be p'rformed on. Purty soon th' familyar strings ov th' Arkansaw

Trav'ler greeted our years, an' in come th' bridle party—fus' come th' bride in th' arms ov her father, an' all th' near relatives, two an' two, each ov 'em hevin' on the'r heads a wreath ov mock-orange an' ceadar; an' ol' Mr. Ben Gimpkins, with his bedecked brow, looked like a Greshun that had hove a weight fu'ther 'n anybody else at th' games. But whar was Barney? He didn't seem t' be nowhar. 'Twas understood that he was t' enter from a rear door an' meet th' bride, but he didn't rack up; an' we wondered. Fin'lly a trap door opened from 'bove, an' they h'isted Barney slowly down in th' room. 'Twas somep'n fine, I'll tell yuh; an' ol' Barney, he was dressed t' kill—ackshally had on cuffs.

Well, they started intuh th' marridge; an' jes' as soon as th' bride an' groom got on that flat-form one end ov it started t' up-end, an' 'twas all me an' Tobe could do settin' on th' other end ov it t' keep it down. But they managed t' see-saw through th' ceremony, howsumever, an' when they got t' thet part whar th' minister says: "Wilt thou, and so forth," Jerusha sed, sorter spikeful-like: "Do you think I'd a-went this fur ef I warn't a-goin' t' hev him?" An' Barney 'lowed "Yuh kin kick me clean out t' Gooseberry Swamp ef I don't."

They was spliced, an' then th' fun commenced;

eve'ybody had t' kiss th' bride, an' sech another smackin' yuh never heern tell ov. They kep' thet pore gal a-kissin' forty minnits, an' lef her mouth in a pucker all th' evenin'; an, whenever she wanted t' say anything arfter she got through kissin' all she could manage t' ejackylate was "ptsu, ptsu." Th' bride, she warn't a-goin' nowhar, but somebody tuk a noshun t' throw a lot ov ol' shoes at her, an' one ov 'em missed her an' struck An' Betsey Soakum right in th' forrud, an' fuh a minnit 'r two she didn't know whether her name was Beetroot or Hawkins befo' she was married. An' one ov 'em struck th' minister, an' he sed some words that I ain't never heered befo', but I don't think they was exactly orthodocks.

Then nothin' mus' do but what we mus' play some games, an' ev'eybody waded right intuh th' fun. Cousin John Bryant wanted t' play "Antony Over," but we had t' hev parlor games instid, so we played "Thimbul." That's a fine game, that "Thimbul." I'll tell yuh, when yuh go 'roun' th' room on'ct or twicet, yuh kin tell who's ben hoein' corn an' who's ben a-darnin' socks. An' 'long thar in th' game whar they set one feller down an' say, "Heavy-heavy hangs over yuh head, fine uh sup'fine," this time they done that t' Isrul Gruggs, an' ol' Isrul made 'em pay some funny forf'its, too. He made ol' Miss Marthy

Herrin' kiss Sam Juniper sebenty-three times, an' me an' Tobe had t' keep tally. Then ol' Miss Sally Punkin, a great-aunt ov Tobe's, had t' git in th' well two hund'ed an' forty-six feet, an' ol' Mr. Ben Gimpkins had t' take her out, an' he said he hoped th' nex' time she fell in th' well she'd go clean through t' Chiny, so's some o' them heathuns would hev t' take her out on th' other side. Tom Jokum had t' "butt th' wall 'an kiss all," an' he got t' buttin' 'roun' an' his head struck a sof' place in th' partishun an' went clean through in th' pantery an' got mixed up with th' punkin pies an' things on th' other side.

An' then we played "Green grows th' Willer Tree," an' "Hev ye any Madery Wine," an' "Ring-around Rosy," an' "Clappin' in an' Clappin Out," an' "Blin' Man's Buff," an' "Jacob an' Rachul," an' "King Billy was King Georgy's Son," an' "Hyuh I Stan' on Two Chips, Who's A-goin' t' Kiss my Ruby Lips?" an' other games. Then Bob Noodle come in with his 'cordyun, an' played "Gran'father's Clock," an' "Wearin' ov th' Green," fuh us.

Then arfter a good deal ov coaxin' an' drivin' an' perswadin', th' crowd pervailed on Miss Genyveeve Araminty Stumps t' sing her lates' composishun, entitled, "Th' Dyin' Jaybird." I dunno whether her style is soul-stirring' or heart-

rendin', but Tobe sed it done both fuh him, an' come near givin' him a yearache in th' barg'in. Arfter she finished singin' I sorter felt like I had done somep'n wrong, so I went over an' 'pologized t' Tobe fuh fetchin' him over thar that night.

Jes' fuh a keepsake I got a copy ov th' song:

The setting sun was slowly sinking down,
Sinking down, sinking down;
His slanting rays did kiss the little town,
Little town, little town;
When he comes up to-morrow
The place will be all sorrow,
For the Jaybird's changed his burdens for a crown,
For a crown, for a crown.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, sadly toll the bells,
How the tolling swells,
Birdy's going.

The rising sun was slowly coming up,
Coming up, coming up,
The place was damp with tears from sorrow's cup,
Sorrow's cup, sorrow's cup;
Oh, my heart is sore and tired,
For the Jaybird has expired,

And the dearest of affection thus must stop,
Thus must stop, thus must stop.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, sadly toll the bells,
How the tolling swells,
Birdy's gone.

We understood that she got th' style ov verse an' th' meter from an' ol' hermit thet lived in th' dale, who uster make root beer, but whether she was under the influence ov root beer or not when she writ th' song, this witness ain't prepared t' testify. She started t' sing another song, entitled "The' Tears Was Fallin' in Droplets," but Tobe sed, "Blamed ef she would," so 'bout th' time she started t' sing Tobe set up a howl, an' sed he was sick, an' ev'eybody run t' fetch sassafras tea an' campfire, an' th' song was blow'd away in th' excitement. Soon 's Tobe foun' out she warn't a-goin' t' sing he sed he was well ag'in, but then our mis'ry was increased when Mis' Patsy Jordan fetched her little boy in an' 'lowed she was goin' t' hev him recite fuh th' comp'ny. He come in an' squared hisse'f, an' bellered with great fo'ce:

I am my Papa's little man,
I always do the best I can;
I do the chores and fetch the wood,
And do so folks will call me good.

I'm head in spelling class at school,
And always keep the Master's rule;
When all my lessons nice are said,
The Master pats me on the head,
And some day when the time is sent,
I'm going to be the President.

An' 'bout ten folks sed at on'ct: "That yuh will, Jimmie, that yuh will." An' me an' Tobe, we jes' laffed, an' when somebody ast us what we was a-laffin' at, Tobe sed, oh, he'd jes' struck his funny-bone, thet was all.

Tablo's come nex'. Them's fine things, tablo's. An' these was good. Had Maud Miller rakin' hay, an' th' Five Wise Virgins thet kep' the'r lamps trimmed an' burning 'til th' bridegroom come; an' woun' up with "Lib'ty Enlightenin' th' Worl'." Had Miss Genyveeve Araminty Stumps, author ov th' "Dyin' Jaybird," up on top of a high stepladder with a taller dip in her hand; an' 'bout th' time th' crowd got t' applaudin', Miss Araminty let thet taller dip cant over a little bit, an' some ov th' grease run down on Miss Patsy Jordan's neck, an' Miss Patsy fainted, an' when they fetched her to it was supper time.

Well, we walked out t' supper; now, mebbe yuh've heern tell ov suppers, but in all ov my time I ain't never seen no sech. Eve'y breeze thet

blowed from th' dinin' room would waf' to'rds yuh mollycules ov roas' pig, an' turkey with sage stuffin' an' ol' Virginny corn bread, an' corn'-beef an' ham an' cabbidge, an' roe herrin' an' spare ribs; an' thet was all mixed up with pickles an' perserves, an' chow-chow an' jam, an' apple sass, an' 'bout th' time yuh felt like yuh was 'bout done fuh, 'long would come a breeze ov plum cake an' fruit cake an' jelly cake, an' mincemeat pies, an' coco'nut pies, an' lemon pies, an' custard pies, an' potato pies. We jes' didn't know whar t' start,—

Which shall it be; which shall it be?
I looked at Tobe, Tobe looked at me;
I gazed on Toby's features fair,
An' wondered how much ov it Tobe could bear.

I had th' pleasure ov settin' nex' t' th' bride at supper, an' foun' her a most interestin' young lady; she was well up on statistics—know'd how many pounds of meat had been butchered in th' Holler ev'y year sence th' War; an' ef yuh tol' her how long it tuk yuh t' put up th' worm fence 'roun' yuh property she could come within five years ov tellin' yuh how much corn yuh'd git off it thet year.

We sot thar an' talked till near 'bout mornin'

an' thar was still 'nuff left on th' table fuh a camp meeting; but we might hev eat 'til th' crack ov doom an' not got t' th' crab apple sass. Long 'bout sunrise ol' Tobe managed t' stagger up with a drumstick in one han' an' a coco'nut pie in th' other; an' he perposed three cheers fuh th' bride an' groom, an' they was give with a will. Then we tol' 'em good mornin' an' went home.

Now thet marridge will go down in hist'ry with sech events as th' 'Mancypashun Procclymashun, an' th' Declarashun ov Indypendunce, an' "A Hot time in th' Ol' Town," an' other interestin' projecks. When I git th' blues, I think ov thet weddin' an' I laff; when I see a ugly gal, I think how purty th' bride was; when I git hungry I think ov thet supper an' my appetite is satisfied; but I ain't never ben able t' think ov thet "Dyin' Jaybird" without bustin' intuh tears.

THE BUZZAR AT HOGGINTOWN.

HOGGINTOWN allus was a great place fuh havin' things. Winter befo' las' they had th' black measles over thar; an' th' winter befo' thet th' horses all had th' blind staggers, an' las' winter when it come 'roun' 'bout havin' time, an' they didn't know what t' hev, ol' Miss Partheny Gadabout, who had been all 'roun' th' worl', mo' or less, she perposed a Buzzar, which *she* sed was th' lates' thing out, an' I reckon it must have ben, becuz we never had heerd ov th' like befo'. Ol' Miss Minky Sparrar sed she warn't in favor ov foolin' with no buzz-saws herself, an' she thought th' idee oughter be kicked out th' sewin' circle. But they outvoted Miss Minky, though half ov 'em didn't know what they was a-votin' fuh. 'Twas th' pervailin' idee thet 't was t' be somepin' 'tween a corn shuckin' an' a quiltin' party.

All th' wimmen in town fuhgot the'r husban's an' chil'ren, an' went t' makin' preparashuns fuh this hyuh Buzzar. We men folks couldn't make

it out 'tall. All thet my wife done fuh three weeks befo' th' Buzzar was darn socks; an' when I would arsk her what she was a-doin' she would smile an' darn 'nother sock; an' fin'lly I got mad an' sez, "Well, darn th' socks, the'r ain't nothin' new 'bout socks, leastways, not 'bout mine."

I asked Tobe Punkin what he know'd 'bout it, an' he sed *his* wife was workin' early an' late makin' sky blue year-bobs; an' Barney Squashe's Jerusha, bless yo' bones, was a-mixin' orange marmylade. Thet knowlidge fetched a spell ov reflecshun on me—what a mixtry. I had heerd tell ov folks eatin' molasses on butter beans, but this thing ov socks an' year-bobs an' marmylade knocked me out completely. Thar was a missin' link somewhar, but we couldn't fin' out 'til th' Buzzar come off, so we waited like Job did.

Th' Fates was kind. (Parson Hackett sed thet; I dunno a fate from Adam's off-ox, but thet is a pet sayin' ov his'n.) Th' public was invited, an' th' public was thar as a committy ov th' whole. Whew, how they did jam an' pack thar thet night! Good many ov th' folks didn't know what 't was goin' t' be like an' fetched the'r guns; an' lots ov 'em wore the'r ol' clothes. An' t' a man they fetched the'r chil'en. 'Twould a' ben a good time t' hev took th' sensus.

Me an' Tobe an' Barney went 'long in t'gether.

Barney paid our ways in an' then we paid him back; thet's what they call a Dutch treat; thet's th' way th' wimmen folks do. When we got in it looked jes' like fairy lan'; our eyes was popped; th' walls was like ontuh a Chin*ee*se Art Gallery; thar was all th' table covers an' bed quilts an' mats an' counterpanes an' muskeeter nettin's in th' county hangin' 'roun' th' ceilin'; an' pictyuhs, don't talk; right up over th' stage thar was a pictyuh ov Brutus stabbin' Seezar, an' a little ways from it was a pictyuh ov Billy Martin's dapple filly; an' right in between th' two, mind yuh, thar was a full-face pictyuh ov Uncle Elzy Rawhide, thet was regarded as a hairloom in th' fambly. Uncle Elzy did look sorter out ov place up thar with his seabreeze whiskers 'twixt Seezar an' th' filly.

All th' little girls was dressed up t' look like they was named Margyreet, an' th' boys represented "Little Lord Fa'ntleroys." Miss Minky Sparrer had overcome her prejudice an' was got up t' represent a milkmaid, an' she was a-flittin' 'roun' through th' crowd singin' "My face is my fortune, sir, she sed." Uncle Reuben Cary an' Cousin John Bryant had on Brownie custoons, an' they was a-sellin' popcorn an' taffy.

We three went in t' git some cream, an' a fairy brought us some thet had got mixed up with th'

salt; an' Tobe very modestly arsked fuh th' pepper vinegar an' th' mustard thet he might complete th' seasonin' ov his cream. An' th' fairy got mad.

Then we crossed over t' th' grab bag; them's great things. Yuh pay ten cents an' git a wad ov paper. Thar's a bigger profit in 'em than thar is in quinine pills.

Over in one corner thar was a sign, "Greates' Wonder ov th' Centchry." We went in; thar was my wife a-settin' thar with her mouth shet. It did beat th' whole Buzzar.

As soon as we got out ov thar ev'eybody got t' shoutin' "Punkin! Punkin! Punkin!" We know'd what was up then. They wanted ol' Tobe t' speak; an' Tobe was ready an' mo' so. He jumped up on th' flatform an' started. He sed:

"Ladies an' Gent'men; feller Buzzarites, one an' all: Oh, fuh th' beanstalk thet Jack planted, thet I might re'ch t' th' high heights thet this occashun expec's ov us." (Then his face got red an' his idees commenced t' fly like swallers in th' spring.) He fu'ther sed: "Yuh hev come hyuh t' night t' behold somepin thet yuh hev never beholded befo'." (An' one ol' lady in green goggles sed, "Thet's so—cert'ny so—I ain't never seen th' like befo'.")

He sed fu'thermo': "Buzzar! What a word

t' thrill th' comin' ages thet's on th' way hyuh. Buzzar! A word thet will make th' wickedes' quack in the'r shoes, an' yet one thet soun's as sof' an' low as th' babblin' streamlets bubblin' over th' pebblin' bottomlets." (An' when Tobe sed them oratorical words I jes' felt like kissin' him; oh, he's a speaker!)

He still fu'thermo' sed: "This event will hang on th' topmos' peg in th' rack ov my mem'ry 'til Father Time with his McCormick binder has folded me up with th' rest ov his crap."

An then he sot down. An' th' folks throw'd up the'r hats an' bonnits an' shawls, an' stomped the'r feet, an' a bevvy ov ladies over in th' cornder raised "Ol' Hund'ed," th' whole Buzzar j'inin' in. Th' crowd made so much fuss thet they made Tobe throw out his chist an' march 'roun' an' 'roun' th' stage five or six times while th' ban' played "Hail t' th' Sheaves." It reminded me ov Inaugurashun Day. Tobe ain't a bit sp'iled; he tuk these honors as ef they was oatmeal purridge.

Soon as things got quiet it was 'nounced thet Mis' Hetty Ripkins' son, who was home fuh th' holidays, would recite. Richard Cow de Lion Ripkins—thet was his name—a little milk an' water dood, with his hair parted in th' middle, an' patent le'ther tips on his Congress gaiters. He

spoke thet reverent selection, "Curfew Must Not Ring Tuh-tuh-tuh-night."

When he got down thar was a big shout, but 'twarn't as big as Tobe's; he warn't as big a man. But th' young gals all sent him bouquets ov life-everlastin' tied up with yaller ribbin.

Th' nex' thing three little gals 'bout th' same size got up an' sung a triplette entitled, "Who Skinned My Tabby Cat's Nose?" Me an' Tobe an' Barney didn't know who they was, but we picked out the'r mammas in th' hall becuz the'r heads was six inches higher'n anybody else's when th' singin' was goin' on. As they finished yuh could hear all over th' hall, "Warn't thet sweet?" an' "Didn't little Prisilla Walker look cute with her hair hangin' down?"

Now, 'mid th' wavin' ov shawls an' bunnits, an' th' raspin' ov th' string ban', in chassaid Miss Euphemia Ruggles, who was t' read "An Ode to a Buzzar," got up fuh this 'cashun:

O, Clio, Muse of Historee,
Give ear unto my poetree;
I hurl the magic word at thee—
Buzzarrrrrrr.

No former poet's wildest dreamlet
Of falling snow or babbling streamlet

E'er rested on my chosen themelet—
Buzzarrrrrrrrr.

The ancient wights of Hoggintown
Have dropped their hoes and shovels down,
Like moths the candle hover 'round—
Buzzarrrrrrrrrrr.

Thar warn't no tellin' how many hund'ed yards ov this she might hev reeled off, ef a certain thing hadn't a-happened. A mighty crash was heerd; th' door was busted in, an' in rushed ol' man Sam'l Prowler who hadn't ben out ov th' house befo' fuh eighteen years. He sez t' his daughter: "Sally, whar's thet red bed quilt yuh made fuh me las' winter?" We looked, an' it was right up in th' top ov th' Buzzar. We tried t' buy th' ol' man off with chocklate cream, but 'twarn't no go. He wanted thet quilt. So we had t' tear down th' whole Buzzar t' give it t' him; an' it broke th' whole thing all t' smash.

Eve'ybody was sorry; but Tobe sed he warn't, becuz thet ode was in a fair way t' last a week.

THE PINK PARTY AT PATHACKET.

FOLKS that ain't worldly an' tries t' conform t' th' ways ov the worl' will sooner er later fin' the'rselves on th' decrease. Thet was th' way with me an' Marandy. Not long ago some new-fashioned nabors, th' Plumbbobs, moved intuh our naborhood, an' they set th' place wild with the'r fancy noshuns. They was allus givin' a swearee, or a whisk party, or a picnic, or somepin or other; an' it kep' me an' Marandy on pins all th' time, 'fraid we'd git invited t' some ov 'em. We did git a cyard onc't sayin' thet they would be at home on a certain evenin', an' I told Marandy I thought 'twas jes' th' proper place for 'em.

One day we did git invited t' a thing over thar; I remember it well, because it was one ov them things yuh don't fergit very easy, like bein' struck by lightnin' or havin' th' smallpox, or gittin' married. This was t' be a "Pink Tea Party," an'

when we read th' thing over I sez: "Well, Marandy, it's come; what's t' be did?"

An' Marandy kinder fetched a long heave an' sez: "I s'pose we mus' go, an' thar ain't a thing on airth I can wear; th' purple is faded, the black needs buttons, th' green's bein' dyed, th' yaller is out of fashion, an' th' blue is ol'-timey an' needs new hooks an' eyes. I might wear the ashes of roses pol'naise an' th' striped bask, but we've got t' wear pink."

Sez I: "Marandy, yuh don't need no pink; yuh air jes' th' pink o' perfeckshun yo'self."

An' she smiled, an' sed: "Hiram, yuh air a sight."

I didn't take thet much t' heart, though, fuh she sed th' same thing when th' hen pecked me.

Thet night we got ready an' went over thar. Marandy had on a pink apurn, an' pink bows in her hair, an' she carried a bouquet ov pinks. I had on my pink shirt with th' poker dots an' my pink necktie, an' my pink suspenders with pictures ov Governor Hendricks on 'em; we drove ol' "Topsy" over, because she had th' pink eye. We got thar early; th' servant let us in. He had a waiter in his han'; we thought he was takin' up colleckshun, an' I put all th' small change I had—thirty cents—in th' waiter.

He sez: "It's fuh cards."

"I'm 'bliged t' yuh," I sez; "I don't play."

He showed us in th' parlor, an' we sot down. Nobody had come, an' we waited pashiently fuh fifteen minnits. Then Marandy lit th' lamp, an' opened th' shetters, an' arranged th' rugs, an' dusted things, while I looked through th' fambly Bible an' th' photygraf album. Then t' while th' time away Marandy sot down t' th' pianny an' knocked off "Rip, slap, set 'em up ag'in, boys," while I done a double shuffle on th' cyarpet.

Then Mr. an' Mrs. Plumbbob come downstairs, an' they was mighty glad t' see us, so they sed. We looked at each other fuh a while, an' wished we was home, an' then th' visitors commenced t' arrive, an' they poured in thar same as corn in a hopper. Ol' Tobe Punkin come in, fixed up in style, proper. He had on a pink linen duster, an' pink ribbins in his Newport ties. Tobe done 'em up pink this time.

Arfter some time we walked in t' tea, two an' two, same as th' animals went intuh th' ark. They had paper napkins; a lady on my lef' picked up one an sez: "Souvenir napkins?"

"I reckin not, mum," sez I; "I thought they was paper."

Sez she: "Beg pardon?"

"Oh," sez I, "say nothin' 'bout it."

I told Marandy this was a tacky affair, an' th'

nex' thing we know'd they'd be passin' 'roun' th' fat back an' th' greens. But they passed somepin t' us thet was t' be eat with a fork, an' fuh th' life ov me, I couldn't see nowhar t' take holt. I kep' a-pokin' an' pryin' aroun', an' finally it slipped from under me, an' lit in th' eye ov a young feller sittin' opposite.

I sez: "I'll bother yuh f' thet piece ov forrin substance out ov yuh eye, ef yuh please."

An' he tossed it playfully back, an' sez: "I've an eye on you, sir."

Th' conversashun drifted from one tropic t' 'nother, from th' Tropic of Cancer t' th' Tropic ov Capricorn, so t' speak; an' finally a great discussion 'rose as t' whether a certain dish called Harmlet was made ov Shakespeare or Bacon; an' a' ol' lady arsked me what I thought ov it, an' I sez: "Omelet, madam, is made ov eggs." An' thet decishun ended th' discusshun.

Arfter we had finished talkin' an' admirin' th' silver, we went back in th' parlor ag'in. I saw two ladies go over in th' cornder an' argue a while, an' presently a young lady sorter sidled out, as ef she didn't want tuh do it much, an' went t' th' pianny, an' sung thet fetchin' song, "I'm Pinin' fuh Thee."

It goes so:

O, Billy, come back to your happy countree;
O, Billy, come back to me;
O, Billy, O, Billy, O, Billy, come back;
O, Billy, I'm pining for thee.
'Back track, come back,
'Billy, I'm pining for thee.

Chorus—

Then Tobe, by special request, recited "Th' Wreck ov th' Hesperums." Tobe allus recites thet by special request. He's allus ready, too, as he has ben a-recitin' ov it ever sence th' War. When they call on him, he says he hasn't anything new, an' he hums an' haws, an' winds up by recitin' "Ol' Hesperums." An' he kin rattle it off purty well.

An' ol' lady favored us with "Father Grimes"; th' las' verse goes:

'Ol' Grimes is dead, thet good ol' soul,
We ne'er shall see him more;
He useter wear an ol' gray coat,
'All buttoned behind.

Then Mr. Plumbbob sed thet thar was a little piece thet he useter recite a long time ago, an'

ef th' audience would bear with him he would recite it fuh us now. We sed we would; thar warn't nothin' else fuh us t' do. He bored us all th' way through, an' we had t' bear with him. He done it like this:

"Of co'se pardon all mistakes; I'm just a little rusty on this. It's Hamlet's Soliloquy; it was writ by Hamlet shortly befo' th' discovery of Mozes in th' bullrushes. It's quite a classick in literatchure—

Tobe or not Tobe—that is the question,
Whether 'tis gobbler an' wine fuh supper,
Th' wings an' marrers ov outrage's fortune;
Or to take arms ag'inst a sea ov troubles,
An' by supposin' end them; to lie, to sleep
No more; an' by thet nap to say we end
Th' backaches an' th' tousled nappy shocks
Thet flesh is hair to; 'tis a consternashun
* * * * *to dream; I thar's th' rub,*

The rub (and he rubbed) th' rub, th' rub-a-dub-dub, rrrrrub, three men in a tub, th' butcher, th' baker, th' candlestick maker, an' they all jumped out ov a rotten pertater, rrrrrub; I think I hev got this a little wrong; I hope you will excuse me; it has escaped me."

'Twas very evident that we perceived th' loss

befo' he did. Mrs. Plumbbob made him feel better by playin' some classical music, Rubenstein's Great Concerto in B Flat. It didn't take; Marandy sed it was fall flat music, she thought. 'Twas a mixtry of "Yankee Doodle" an "Th' Campbells is Comin," with jest a dash ov "When I Raise My Ebenezer" in it.

They all got arfter Marandy t' give her lates' po'm. If thar's a thing on airth thet Marandy kin do it's write po'try, an' likewise make muffins. One mornin' endurin' the big freeze last winter she slipped on th' ice, an' when I run t' her t' see ef she was hurt, she looked up through her tears an' sed,—

I tuk a trip
'An' lost my grip,
'An' th' wicked ice
Give me th' slip.

I know'd she warn't much hurt.

But when they called on her thet night she stepped out intuh th' floor without no affectashun whatever, an' recited an agricultural po'm entitled "An Ode to a Thomas Tit":

The Thomas Tit sot on th' ol' worm fence,
With a mischeevous wink in his eye,

Th' wynd was blowin' through th' beards of th' wheat,
'An' his face was all a-rye.
His thoughts they seemed t' be in a-maze,
Concerning his corns he did parley;
He informed us thet he had sown his wild oats,
He had mixed them all up with his barley.

Them p'ints was far-fetched, an' when she finished most ov th' folks had got on the'r wraps an' tol' th' Plumbbobs good night. Marandy felt real bad 'bout it; an' on th' way home she sed but little. As we reached th' outer gate, she sez: "Hirum, don't yuh think I'd better rewrite thet po'm?"

And I sez: "Do as yuh like, my dear; yuh hev always done it."

THE COUNTY FAIR.

Me an' Tobe Punkin was naborin' farmers, an' had ben fuh some little time, but Tobe hadn't never ben off of his farm an' I hadn't ben fur from mine, so yuh kin see from this thet we was quite onsofisticated in th' ways ov th' worl'. But we tuk th' papers an' kep' posted.

One Sunday arfternoon, when me an' Tobe had read ev'ything in th' "Moonshiner," we calc'lated we'd go tuh th' County Fair in th' 'jinin' county th' next week, an' fuhgit all 'bout th' farm fuh a day or two anyhow.

We didn't think 'bout nothin' else but th' Fair all endurin' th' week. We talked 'bout it, an' we read 'bout it, an' we dreamp' 'bout it. We was in a Fair way. Friday mornin' we was goin'. Thet mornin' I got up at daybreak t' git myse'f in shape fuh th' fray. At half-pas' fo' I heerd a noise, an' peeked through th' shetters. Shiverin' Mozez! thar was ol' Tobe in his store close, makin' fuh th' depot as ef ol' Nick was arfter him.

Sez I: "Tobe, whar air yuh a-goin'? Th' train don' leave 'til nine, an' yuh've got three whole hours befo' yuh t' git ready."

Tobe jibed his sails an' went back home mad but convinced.

I fed th' cows, an' done th' chores, an' cut th' wood, an' licked William, an' eat my breakfas'. Then 'twas near 'bout time t' start, an' Marandy commenced t' warn 'g'inst th' 'rath tuh come, an' other various things. She sez:

"Now, Hirum, keep yo' han's on yo' pocket-book, an' don't talk too much; stay near Tobe, an' don't spend no money foolish; hold yo' hat on yo' head, an' don't eat nothin' sour; bring me a dress pattern, an' don't fuhgit t' remember th' chil'ren."

"Yes'm," sez I; "an' it's a big time I'm a-goin' t' hev flirtin' with th' gals t'day."

An' Marandy got 'bout half serious an' sez:

"Ef any ov them gals over thar git stuck on thet ol' faded alpacker coat, an' them linin britches, then they air bigger fools than any gals I have ever know'd anything 'bout."

Then I was mad, an' I jes' lef' Marandy 'thout even tellin' her good-bye. I went by fuh Tobe, an' waited 'til he tol' Mrs. Tobe an' th' Tobe juniors good-bye. An' we lit out fuh th' stashun. We rushed intuh th' depot, an' Tobe sez: "Two tickets fuh Croakerville."

"Roun' trip tickets?" sez th' gent'man.

"Naw," sed we both at onc't, "square ones will do jes' as well."

But we got two ov them roun' tickets, an' waited fuh th' train. In a few minnits th' locomotif come waltzin' in, a-puffin' an' a-snortin'. Tobe grabbed a ladder an' tried t' climb in th' winder. An ol' lady settin' at th' winder was jes' in th' ack ov throwin' out a glass ov water, an' it struck Tobe full an' fair in th' face. Down he come in th' midst ov a crowd of ladies, an' fuh a minnit or two he jes' knocked things silly.

I hurried 'bo'd an' got Tobe on th' train, an' we started on our great journey t' Croakerville. In a few minnits th' Corndoctor come aroun' an' he sez p'litely, "Tickets, please."

"Sir," sez Tobe.

"Tickets," sez he.

"Well, yuh can't hev it," sez Tobe; "I paid sixty cents fuh this ticket t' go t' Croakerville, an' I ain't a-goin' t' give it away t' th' firs' man thet comes 'long an' arsks fuh it, yuh may be shore."

It tuk him some time t' convince Tobe thet he had t' give up thet ticket or he couldn't see th' fair, but at las' he let her go.

Purty soon a pert little feller come 'long an' poked a lot ov fruit under our noses.

"Thankee, yes," sez Tobe, an' we helped our-

selves. Tobe tuk a bannanna, an' some dried figs, an' I got some gumdrops an' a' sheep nose appul. The boy sez: "Ninety cents, please."

"Fuh what?" sez Tobe.

"Fuh thet fruit; yuh don't suppose I give it t' yer, do yer?"

"I cert'ny do," sez Tobe, "an' yuh don't git a cent."

Thet ended it. He lost.

We reached Croakerville 'live, an' went right t' th' Fair Groun's. Whew! 'twas a big thing. Jes' inside th' gate, kinder out ov sight, thar was a man sayin:

"Right this way—make yo' fortin'; who kin ketch th' greasy pig; hyuh she goes, an' thar she goes; which one is she under?"

"Which one is she under?" arsked Tobe.

"Yes," sed the man.

"Th' one t' yo' lef'," sed Tobe.

"I'll bet yuh five."

"Good," sed Tobe; "Hirum, this is rich. I seen him put it under thar."

Tobe lost. We marched on t' th' gran' stan'. Th' horses was off. Tobe got wil'. As we walked up in th' stan' a smart youngster sez: "Billy, whar d'ye reckon th' freaks is registered?"

"Go bang yo' head," sez Tobe.

'Twarn't warm enuff in th' gran' stan' fuh Tobe, so we went over in th' quarter stretch, 'mongst th' spo'tin characters.

"Th' race is on now," sez a man in a spotted vest, " 'tween Lady Johnson an' Hector B. Five t' one on Hector B. Five t' one on Hector B."

"I'll take five ov 'em," sez Tobe; "I owned Lady Johnson 'til she was two year ol', an' I'll back her 'g'inst anything."

Tobe got his odds, an' th' race was on. Lady Johnson lost th' heat; Tobe los' his *one*.

"She can't trot," sez Tobe, sort ov disgusted; "I'll git it back now."

"Five t' one on Lady Johnson," sed another man with a striped vest.

"Good," sez Tobe, "hyuh's whar I git square."

'Twas fixed. Off they went ag'in. Hector B. second. Tobe loses ag'in. He growed serious.

"I know'd Lady Johnson could beat him," sed Tobe, worried; "I'll try 'em ag'in." This time he foun' a man with no vest on who wanted t' bet even money on 'em, an' he tuk Hector B. Off they trotted ag'in, an' 'twas neck an' neck, fus' Lady Johnson an' then Hector B. would be in th' lead; Tobe was in a col' sweat; I was oneasy 'bout him. He was a-shiverin' an' a-shakin'. Roun' an' roun' them horses went, makin' th' dus' fly; ev'y eye was strained an' ev'y heart was

thumpin', an' ev'y pocketbook was in th' balunce; Tobe was a dancin' th' highlan' fling when Lady Johnson rounded th' first half two lengths ahead; he whooped when she got on th' stretch fo' lengths ahead; he c'lapsed when she drapped behin' in th' last hund'ed feet; but she's a-gainin'—Tobe roused up—"Smoked herrin's, Hirum, she's a-gainin', she's a-gainin', she's a-gainin'; go it, Lady Johnson! I'm a-bettin' on yuh. Ya-a-a-a-a-h-o-o-o-o-o-o!!!!!!"

She passed under th' wire fo' foot ahead. Tobe grabbed the man with no vest an' t'gether they hunted th' stakeholder. Tobe had won forty dollars.

We went to th' restaurant. Tobe walked in with his chist throw'd out an' his head in th' air. He whispered somepin t' th' lady thet come t' wait on us. She turned 'roun' an' hollered t' th' back part ov th' room:

"Corned beef — ham — cabbage — turkey — chicken—corn bread—chow-chow—spare rib—mince pie—chocolate cake—ice cream—lemonade—sausage—pickles—preserves—quince—bottle of beer—ma-a-a-a-a-a-ake it tw-o-o-o!"

DOCTOR SILAS.

YUH know my son, Silas, then, do yuh? A likely sort ov a youngster, an' a mighty good doctor. Thet's what they think 'roun' in these parts. I hev spent lots ov money on him. He *oughter* be smart as red pepper. He allus was a peart young un. Spelled 'em all down one night at th' school—th' teacher, Lawyer Babbitt, an' th' whole bunch ov 'em—on th' word sasparilly. Went t' Buntin' College an' tuk th' ol' Bachelor's papers in three year, an' has got a medal as big as a horse cake fuh speakin' up thar.

We had him fixed fuh a preacher, but it warn't no use. Si want'd t' be a doctor; was jam crazy 'bout bones an' livers an' gizzards, an' things ov thet stamp. We had a Dominicker rooster thet broke his leg onc't, an' Si put it in splinters 'til it mended; an' now, eve'y time thet fowl fetches a step he gouges a han'ful ov feathers out ov his side with his toe nail; but still I reckon it was fur better than only one leg.

It's jes' a little over two year now thet he come home from th' Docturial Collidge, full ov knowledge an' surgical insterments. An' he hadn't ben home forty-eight hours befo' he want'd t' cut a wen out ov my neck I had had thar fuh forty-five years.

"Oh, no, Si; I'm blest ef yuh do," sez I; "how do yuh think I'd manidge t' git 'long 'thout thet wen?"

He studied all th' time, an' arfter a while picked up some practice. I 'member ol' Doctor Gimpkins called in t' consult with him onc't 'bout a case ov typhoid; an' from th' way *he* shook his head with Si, I calc'lated Si was some sort ov a gineral on typhoid.

An' yuh never heerd 'bout th' time he dosed th' brindle cow? Th' time ol' Betsey had th' colic? Thet's an epizootic in Si's life. It was jes' bout dark one night when Betsey was tuk with a' awful spell. We drenched her, but she didn't git no easier. Tobe Punkin fetched out three or fo' remedies ov his, but she was 'bove 'em all. Fin'lly Si come out an' tuk a look. He thumped ol' Betsey onc't or twic't; then he looked at her teeth; nex' he wiggled her years; then he run in th' house an' got his box ov instermentalities. He sed she was sufferin' from salubrious gyrashuns, an' he imagined a happy-dynamite inter-

jeckshun would brace her up cornsider'bl'. I reckoned it would. Then he sed no, he warn't shore ov thet; thet prob'ly thar was a nubbin' in her uniform appendix. I surrendered. I didn't know before thet a brindle cow had innards like a Waterbury watch. I figgered on buyin' a new cow right off. Betsey listened t' th' discussion pashiently. She seemed resigned t' her fate. Si got ev'ything ready an' give ol' Bet th' dose. Betsey stood an' thought ov her sins while th' mixtry was gittin' in its work. Then th' fun commenced; an' 'twas fun. Th' only diffunce between it an' a circis was th' price ov admisshun. John Robinson's Show was a bad secind. Betsey bow'd t' her pardners an' th' dance was on; she ballunced all, an' led her lady over; she swung; she danced th' cauliflower; she promenaded; she chassade, all th' time callin' figgers herse'f; she ladies t' th' right; gent'men also; an' then she showed how th' gran' change oughter be did. An' th' young sparks sh'd hev been thar t' see it done right. All ov us jumped th' fence t' git out ov th' way; so did she. She stood on one foot an' winked her eye at th' moon; then she got up 'g'inst the smokehouse an' demolished three hams with her starboard horn; she turned cat-out-ov-th'-skin over th' well pole; she run t' th' front fence an' hollered "fire!"; she got in th' corn

crib an' made a patent sheller ov herse'f; she danced th' "Georgy Buck"; she cake-walked all over th' onion settin's; she run up t' whar Tobe Punkin was standin' on th' other side ov th' fence, an' dared him t' come over; she switched her tail savidgely at Si, an' tol' him what she thought ov *him;* she jumped straight up an' down an' sung "I know thet I'm weak an' sinful"; an' then she got mad in earnest an' commenced t' swear; an' th' way she swore was a caushun; I 'spect ef Parson Hackett had ben thar I'd a-ben turned out ov th' church; *whar* she larn't it I can't 'magine; I kin hear her yet. . . . Arfter this was all over an' she had tol' us all her opinyun ov us, she decided t' call on all ov her frien's in th' county, an' she broke out. We didn't see her no mo' 'til sundown, an' when she come in she had los' forty poun'. 'Twas a job t' fatten her over ag'in.

Is thar a moral? Oh, yes, a very 'pinted one. It's this: A feller might know lots 'bout human natur', an' yet he ain't fit t' doctor a cow.

TOBE PUNKIN ON THE PHILIPPINES.

"I SEE thet another town's fallen," said Mr. Punkin, glancing over the headlines of his paper, which he had just drawn from the village post office.

"Yes," returned the postmaster, "they're havin' quite a shower of 'em out thar."

"I've ben a-thinkin'," nodded Mr. Punkin, "thet 'twouldn't be a bad idee fuh Miss Minky Sparrer t' go out thar 'n' 'stablish a Home fuh Fallen Towns; she's allus got her head sot on some sorter reskew work.

"I've ben readin' a good deal 'bout these fallin' towns, Tobe, an' I ain't never ben able to figger out whar they fall from, nuh whar they fall tuh."

"Well," observed Mr. Punkin, "it ain't an easy thing t' a man who don't understand it. Yuh see, when a gin'ral strikes a town, it falls, an' th' people hav' t' come out with all of their silk dresses an' jewl'ry an' varyus other hairlooms an' beg the victoryus gin'ral t' take 'em; an' then a corp'-

ral with eight men is lef' thar t' set on th' fallen town, so to speak, an' hol' it down, while th' main j'int of th' army marches on t' strike th' nex' town below th' belt. T' take a town now an' then keeps th' folks quiet at home an' kinder perserves order in th' Cabinet meetin's. Now they've took some o' them towns out thar es many as five times, an' some others not mor'n three. Thar's nothin' like havin' a town yuh kin fall back on. Fuh instance, Gin'ral Otis sez some fine mornin' tuh his officers: 'Boys, we'll take th' City ov Dooteronomy to-day.' 'But, gin'ral,' sez a second leftenant, 'we tuk it las' Thursday.' 'That's all right,' sez Otis, 'we'll take it ag'in; yuh oughter be thankful we've got it t' take;' an' then they all take brandy an' sody. When things is ready they ride up t' th' City ov Dooteronomy an' say to May'r Pedro de Broomstraw: 'Turn out th' guard, we've come t' capture th' city!' An' the May'r sez, without salutin': 'Gentlemen, this ain't fair; we've been tuk fo' times sence th' fo'th ov July, an' th' las' time yuh was here yuh promised yuh wouldn't take us no mo' until nex' spring; all our mil'tary is over in Hong Kong attendin' a Chinese fun'rl; an' th' Home Guard is drunk, an' we can't turn a wheel.' But, nevertheless, th' town falls and th' victoryus army marches in, captures three old women, a jag o'

timothy hay an' some clean shirts, an' another great vict'ry is won——"

"Good-evenin', Mr. Punkin," broke in Euky Mears, as he shambled into the store and spat in the sand box, "hev they ketched Aggynaldo yit?"

"No; not yit, Euky. He's about 's hard t' spot 's Dave Hill; they've plucked locks ov his hair, an tuk towns from under 'im, an' ketched 'im three or fo' times in a half-acre lot with ten thousan' men aroun' 'im, an' wired th' President they was about t' bag 'im; an' th' nex' day a despatch comes thet he's in Peory 'r Kansas City 'r Bombay, with a recruitin' office in full blast. One reason why our boys don't ketch them heatheren is because they hev so much baggage t' carry. When th' Amerikin soldier starts out he has t' take 'long with 'im a hod o' coal an' a barr'l o' water an' a shuck mattress an' two pairs ov extry boots an' a milkin' pail an' a stepladder an' a cross-cut saw an' a typewritin' machine an' a keg o' beer, so I've seen by th' regylashuns, an' 'tain't no easy job t' carry 'em all; while them savage devils don't wear nothin' but a pair o' jute-bagging overhalls an' a stone-bruise, an' when it comes t' runnin' they kin give th' Amerikin soldier two in th' game an' beat 'im."

"Gin'ral Otis seems t' be havin' troubles ov his

own," ventured Heck Shamblin, the latest arrival.

"Yes," returned Mr. Punkin, bisecting a plug of 'Westover,' "an' I don't wonder at it. Yuh see, it's this a-way. Gin'ral Otis is worked t' death. Th' fust thing in th' mornin' th' quartermaster comes up an' he sez: 'Gin'ral, we air out of beans.' 'All right,' sez th' gin'ral, 'yuh go back t' th' kitchen an' peel them pertaters, an' I'll go right down t' th' beanery an' order some'—an' he don't go. Then up comes Major Sawbones an' sez: 'Gin'ral, thar's a man 'roun' th' corner jes' tuk with a magnipohedrious enlargement ov th' skyrombiums; what mus' we do with 'im?' An' th' gin'ral sez, sez he: 'Keep cool; I'll be 'roun' presently an' give 'im an overdose o' flaxseed meal'—an' he don't go. Now, 'bout this time th' ordnance officer rides up, sorter worried like, breathin' fast. 'Gin'ral Otis, thar's ten tons o' cannon balls jes' come in on th' transport "Mary Walker"; how 'bout th' unloadin' ov 'em?' An' th' gin'ral, without lookin' up from his copy ov 'David Harum,' sez: 'All right, Cap'n Bulletts, I'll go down thar th' firs' thing in th' mornin' an' onload 'em'—an' he don't go. Purty soon Gin'ral Joe Wheeler rides up on a bay horse, an', risin' in his stirrups an' salutin', he 'lows thet he's

struck a mare's nes', an' ef he jes' know'd whar he could git a couple o' hund'ed cav'lry, he'd make more Philippine chowder than had ever ben seen in them diggin's; an' Gin'ral Otis, he strokes his Burnsides an' sez: 'I'll make it my bizness t' walk 'roun' thar after supper an' see 'bout it'—an' he don't go. Long to'rds night Gin'ral MacArthur, who is a man ov few words, comes up, purty mad, an' he shouts: 'Gin'ral, we've foun' Aggynaldo!' 'Umph-humph,' sez Gin'ral Otis; 'whar is he?' 'He's down thar in th' Jersey Central yards, hidin' in a box car, an' I think we kin git 'im.' 'All right,' sez Gin'ral Otis, 'don't bother 'im; leave 'im be 'til nex' Thursday, an' ef it's a clear day we'll go down thar an' ketch 'im.' Now, Gin'ral Otis natcherly by this time is purty smartly mixed up; an' he can't remember fuh th' life ov 'im whether he's got t' git th' beans fuh Gin'ral Wheeler, 'r make Gin'ral MacArthur onload th' cannon balls, 'r give th' flaxseed meal t' th' quartermaster, 'r swallow th' cav'lry. It's 'nough t' mix up any man. An' 'bout ev'y other day comes a message from the War Department readin' suthin' like this: 'You still have our order for Aggynaldo; can't we git him in time f'r the fall openin'?' An' th' gin'ral gits out a printed slip which reads: 'Will ship last of the

week,' an' sends it on. They're playin' tag, boys, an' the gin'ral is *it;* an' Aggie, he's got his men down in th' low groun's mouldin' bullets an' practicin' on th' race track, an' he's a-grindin' out proclymashuns at a pow'ful rate."

MR. PUNKIN DILATES ON WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

THE postmaster had barely finished distributing the latest copies of the *Croakerville Weekly* when Tobe Punkin sauntered into the store to purchase an ounce bottle of quinine, for the chilly season was fast approaching. Close upon the heels of Tobe came Euky Mears and Heck Shamblin and Ab. Risley's boy and the whole crowd of loafers who make life worth living in Pathacket.

"This is a great worl'," remarked Tobe, as he spat through the half-inch hole in the isinglass.

"What's th' matter now?" asked the P.M.; "chickens got th' gyaps ag'in?"

"No; but I see they're telegrafin' 'thout wires; when they fus' begun, 'bout forty-five year ago, I wondered how they done it 'tall; an' now, by th' horns ov Be'lzebub, they do it 'thout any wires. I'll tell yuh, I ain't s'prised at nothin' I hear; ef a message was t' come in now thet ol' man Ben

Gimpkins, yo' grandfather, who's ben dead thirty-five years, was out in th' road, I wouldn't say no mo' when he come in but 'Howdy, Mr. Gimpkins?' Now, I've ben readin' consid'rbly 'bout th' thing——"

"Who started it, Mr. Punkin?" interrupted Euky Mears, the Pathacket exclamation point.

"Well, Euky, my boy, thet's purty hard t' tell; this yer feller, Signal Macarony, he sez *he's* th' fust man; but thar's a feller up in New York named Nick somethin', Saint Nick er ol' Nick, I dunno which, an' he sez he know'd it ten year ago. Then thar's a college perfesser, he sez he got a patent on it 'fore th' War; an' some sez Shakespeere's th' man; an' some sez Bacon, an' others sez Julyus Sezar; an' still others sez Confushus, an' Moses, an' Abraham, an' Noah, an' Adam; all ov 'em have their admirers. It's all th' same t' me; I don't know exactly who diskivered tobacky, but thet don't keep me from smokin' an' chawin' ov it. It's jest like this: I was born an' raised right hyuh in Pathacket—ain't never ben mo'n sixty mile f'um it in my life—an' yet, ef I was t' die famous to-morrer, ev'y town in this seckshun ov th' State would be claimin' t' be th' place ov my birth, an' some ov 'em over in Caroliny, I reckon."

"What's th' use in telegrafin' 'thout wires when

yuh kin git wires t' telegraf with?" asked Heck Shamblin, who was much disturbed over the whole matter.

"I s'pose one reason," returned Mr. Punkin, slyly, "is becuz it saves a good deal ov wire-pullin'; an, then ag'in, it's a good thing fuh y'ot races. Yuh remember, a year or so ago, when th' 'Hail Columbia' an' th' 'Green Leaves ov Shamrock' was a-racin' fuh th' cup, each ov 'em playin' fuh wind, which, by th' way, they didn't git, yuh could set up in th' middle ov New York an' git messages like this: 'No wind t'-day'; 'Hail Columbia sparrin' fuh p'ints'; 'Shamrock a leetle groggy'; 'Columbia loses a whifflin' pin'; 'Cap'n Bob Evans lights a seegar'; 'Th' excurshun boat "Mary Walker" breaks her trace-chains,' er other interestin' messages concernin' th' excitin' races; an' folks didn't have t' hire a tugboat t' know what was goin' on. Ev'y now an' then a boat would sidle up t' Signal Macarony's y'ot, an' a man would say: 'Signal Macarony, would yuh be so 'bligin' 's t' telegraf my wife thet I won't be home 'til dark; thet she needn't wait supper fuh me?' An' Signal would put on th' trolley an' turn th' indicator 'roun' t' six p'ints, an' th' message'd go through like li'tenin'. Thar ain't nothin' like it. Why, yuh kin put up one o' them insterments 'leckshun day an' git

th' returns f'um th' back deestricts thirty minutes after th' polls closes."

"How big is one ov them insterments, Mr. Punkin?" young Risley wanted to know.

"It's a leetle bit o' thing, Abby; yuh kin carry it in th' tail pocket ov yo' coat; thet's th' advantage ov it. Fuh instance, a man goes out huntin' an' gits treed by a b'ar; all he has t' do is t' git out thet contryvance an' telegraf t' th' neares' town: 'To th' reskew; I'm up a tree'; an' forthwith, immedjitly, th' Home Guards turns out an' saves him, an' thar's another convert t' science. Ev'y man's his own wireless telegrafer."

"But," said the postmaster, slowly masticating the hind leg of a horse cake, "thar's many difficulties in th' way ov a succesf'l op'rashun of this thing——"

"Thet's so," chimed in Mr. Punkin, without waiting to hear what the postmaster's objections were; "she has her faults, ez ev'ybody sez about th' lady preacher, fuh when th' thing gits t' workin' purty well 'roun' th' country thar's goin' t' be confushun by th' cartload. These hyuh insterments 'll be up all over ev'ywhar, an' when a message is sent yuh won't know who it's fuh. Fuh instance, s'posen' Parson Jones had th' throttle ov his wireless telegraf open, an' a messije was t' come down it sayin': 'Kid McCoy licked

in five rounds, and the money's yours'; er s'pose-en' ol' Dick Parks, th' oneries' cuss in th' whol' village, was t' git one: 'What'll be your text next Sunday?' 'Twould, ez you see, give rise t' some leetle trouble. Ev'ybody'd be gittin' ev'y-body else's messijes es they was a chassain' through th' *either*——"

"What's either?" broke in the postmaster.

"*Either,* yuh know, 's th' stuff they use in place o' wires; it's a sorter mixtry of goosegrease an' spearmint, so's I've been told; an' th' mo' *either* yuh have, th' fu'ther yuh kin telegraf."

"It'll take a' all-fired sight o' *either* when it gits t' workin' good, t' keep th' thing a-goin'," said Euky positively.

"Yes," retorted Tobe, "but what's *either* ez compared t' th' investigashuns ov s'ience. It tuk a winesap appul t' diskiver th' attrackshun ov gravytashun, but what is appuls when gravyta-shun's at stake? I wouldn't give one bar'l o' gravytashun fuh all th' winesaps in this county; cuz ef 'twarn't fuh gravytashun, we'd all be hangin' by our sock-yarns on th' horns ov th' moon. I'm allus t' be foun' on th' side of s'ience, a-sighin' fuh mo' ov it. Some o' these days I ex-pec' t' be a perfesser ov s'ience ov some sort; think ov it—'T. Punkin, Perfesser ov Wireless Telegrafy an' th' S'ience ov Corn Plantin'.' "

"I see thet th' Gov'ment's goin' t' take holt ov this invenshun," said Heck Shamblin, deliberately peeling off a white pine shaving.

"Ef it do," said Mr. Punkin, emphatically, "Signal Macarony had better beware, fuh thar won't be enuff ov it lef' t' him t' tell th' time o' day with. This is a right good ov a Gov'ment, but it's purty tough on invenshuns. Ef Signal Macarony don't want t' peddle peanuts th' balunce ov his days he'd better not dicker with Uncle Sam 'bout this invenshun of his'n. I'd ez live try t' peddle gunpowder in th' lower rejuns ez t' think ov realizin' anything on sellin' an invenshun t' th' Gov'ment. Th' only man thet gits ahead ov Uncle Samuel is th' penshuner."

MR. PUNKIN TALKS OF FOOTBALL.

THE postmaster handed Mr. Punkin his papers and went forward to wait on a customer. Tobe ripped the wrapper from around a belated copy of the *Croakerville Moonshiner,* and diligently peered over the rims of his glasses at the headlines.

"What's th' news, Tobe?" asked the P.M., as he strolled leisurely back and arranged himself on the dry goods counter.

"Well, I see they air at this blasted football ag'in; seems as ef it lasts 'bout half th' year. Las' week's paper contained th' account ov a feller that had his year chawed off; an' t'-night I see thet anuther's dislocated a j'int ov his spinyal colyum. It's a' awful game on spines. When a man goes out t' play football he sh'd leave his spinyal colyum in th' back closet. When I was a boy they uster kick th' ball, an' now, 'cordin' t' th' rules, as I onderstan' 'em, they kicks each

other. Thar's one advantidge in this—it saves th' ball.

"Th' rankes' set ov players in this whole kentry is them Indyuns from Arizony thet's trained by Jarn Carlile; yuh know, Jarn uster be th' Secketary ov th' Gol' Bon' Department in th' las' Cabinet ov th' Democrats. He got out ov a job, an' as he was a sort ov a raw-bonied feller, he thought it no mo'n right thet he should make an hones' livin' by playin' football; so he made a deal with Buffalo Bill fuh sixteen long-legged Indyuns, with good stayin' qual'ties; an' from th' way they play this hyuh football it looks es ef he'd got 'em. These hyuh milk an' water doods from th' Eas' can't stan' up befo' 'em. Ol' Jarn has tuk 'em an' beat all ov th' collidges with 'em. Th' cap'n ov th' team is ol' Sittin' Bull, an' when he breaks through th' crowd he gits a skalp. I read an account ov a game that was play'd some time ago, an' 'twas most int'restin' readin', too."

"Air they wil' Injuns?" asked Ab. Risley's boy.

"Wil' es March hares," returned Mr. Punkin; "they goes intuh a game with nothin' on but a gingham apurn an' a rubber nose, an' they greases the'r legs, an' ther' jes ain't no ketchin' ov 'em. Jarn Carlile, he stan's in front ov th' gran' stan', with his hair breshed back an' his linen duster buttoned up t' th' chin, an' urges th' Indyuns on,

tellin' 'em stories ov Pocahontus an' Tammany Hall an' other famous Indyun warriors.

"Th' cap'n ov th' white team sez: 'Two, fo', six, eight, ketch 'em.' An' th' Indyuns smile, an' draps th' man with th' ball in his tracks. It's easy. Th' Indyuns gits th' ball. 'Now, eat 'em up, boys!' sez Jarn, clearin' his throat. An' th' Indyun cap'n sez: 'Patchykerwomoco, ugh!' an' each man's gone with a han'ful ov eyes an' britches. Yuh see, they can't git ontuh th'r langwidge. Well, they line up ag'in. 'Now,' sez Jarn t' th' quarterback, 'Rubberneck, yuh bore a hole in thet feller with th' pink stockin's on.' An' when they ontangle the'rselves th' feller with th' pinks has got a hole in his liver big enough t' drive a cyart through; an' he don't play no mo' 'til season arfter nex'."

"But I see these hyuh fellers from Princetown beat 'em th' other day," spoke up Euky Mears, who at intervals read the newspapers.

"Yes," assented Mr. Punkin; "they did beat 'em; an' it happened this way. Yuh see, Governor Clevelan' lives at Princetown, an' when Jarn Carlile tuk his men down thar ov co'se th' ex-President invited Jarn t' dine with him. An' they lingered too long over the'r dinner, talkin' over ol' times. When three o'clock come, an' Jarn didn't turn up, th' boys sed: 'Whar is he? He ain't

never went back on us befo'.' An' they waited, an' they waited, an' they waited. An' Jarn didn't come. So they started th' game 'thout him. But 'twas like makin' bread 'thout salt. They done the'r best, but 'twarn't like 'twas when Jarn was there.

"Meanwhile, Jarn was listenin' t' th' ex-President's jokes, an' laffin' at th' babies; an' he fuh once fuhgot thet he had a football team down on th' green. Fin'lly one ov th' chil'ren tackled him 'roun' th' leg, an' he come t' hisse'f. 'Livin' pitchers!' sez Jarn, 'th' firs' half's ben played!' An' he grabbed his hat an' made fuh th' field. But 'twas too late; when he got thar th' damage had ben done. Th' Princetowns had 'em beat."

"But they didn't play at Princetown," asserted Euky, who evidently knew what he was talking about.

"Well, Jarn must hev stopped over thar," said Mr. Punkin, positively; "it couldn't hev happened no other way."

THE SITUATION IN THE TRANSVAAL.

THE postmaster had just finished wrapping up two pounds of dried apples when Mr. Punkin sauntered in with a six-pound sweet potato which he had recently dug.

"Fine pertater," said the P.M.; "what yuh goin' t' do with it?"

"I thought I'd send it t' our congressman; he's ben a-sendin' me seeds fuh two years thet won't fetch anything; an' I jes' want t' let him know thet I'm a-farmin' in spite o' Congress."

"I see thet we've got more war to read 'bout," said the Government official.

"Yes," said Mr. Punkin, wisely wagging his head, "I know'd 'twas a-comin' as soon as they wound up thet Peace Conferrence over at th' Hog. Things is th' same all th' worl' over—look what a spell ov cussedness follers every 'protracted meetin' in Pathacket. We'll hev war now fuh thirty-five or forty years, all on account ov

thet plag'ed conferrence. Th' represent'tives ov all nashuns was thar in long coats an' pleasant smiles, an' ef yuh'd a-hollered murder, thar'd a-ben more six shooters an' other we'pons draw'd than ever yuh seen at a' arsenal. They got t'gether fuh th' sole purpose ov gittin' ont' each other's fightin' tricks; an' when they couldn't bluff no longer, they 'journ'd. Arbytrashun is a method ov settlin' disputes betwixt two countries thet's afraid ov one 'nuther. Th' main things 'bout arbytrashuns is th' fees paid t' arbytraitors. Now, 'bout this Transvalley——"

"Whar is this Transvalley?" asked Heck Shamblin.

"It's in Africky," said Mr. Punkin, solemnly, looking his questioner straight in the eye, "with th' Is'mus ov Swezee on one side, an' Indignashun Bay on th' other. Th' folks thar is awful hard t' talk tuh, an' fuh thet reason they air called Bores. Th' trouble down thar seems t' be 'bout suzyrainty. Thet, as I understand it, is a sort ov irrigashun skeem; thar is some question now as t' whether they've got it or not; but they'll hev it by th' time th' war's over, all right 'nuff. Th' Bores is weak on artill'ry; they hev only four seej guns an' a couple ov goats; but they hev already made great progress in th' commissary department."

"Thay air what yuh'd call a lot ov smooth Bores," drawled Heck innocently.

Mr. Punkin pretended not to notice the pun and proceeded:

"They ain't much on capturin' ban's ov military, but yuh jes' let a wagon load ov cheese, 'r beans, 'r canned lobster go through the'r deestrict, an' it's the'r meat, shore. They may not git all th' fightin' they air lookin' fuh, but they air a-goin' t' hev three square meals a day ef th' Union Jack has t' trail in th' dus'."

"What brought th' war on?" asked Euky Mears, who had been half asleep behind the stove while Mr. Punkin was talking.

"Ultymatums," said Mr. Punkins in a hoarse whisper; "th' wickedes' contrivances thet was ever invented. They air fixed t' go off at a certain time, an' when they do go off somebody's goin' t' git hurt. Englan' is death on ultymatums, but th' Bores got the'rs in firs' this time; an' Mr. Chamberline, who is doin' th' makin' ov th' British ultymatums, is might'ly upsot 'bout it."

"Can't anybody make an ultymatum?" asked Euky doubtingly.

"Oh, yes," asserted Mr. Punkin; "I could make one, but I dunno thet 'twould go off at th' proper time. Th' Sultan ov Turkey got so many some time ago thet he nicknamed 'em multyma-

tums, *multy* bein' th' Arabian word fuh 'a good deal.' Somehow or ruther, they wouldn't take on th' Sultan; in thet respec' multymatums is like vacksinashuns. Th' king pin ov th' Transvalley is Dusty Roads, a bachelor, who has made lots ov money down thar out ov real estate an' th' laundry bizness. He will probably git not less than two per cent. commissions on the cost ov th' war. I see thet th' Bores has offered a good sum fuh th' head ov Dusty, dead or 'live. I bow t' the'r bizness judgment; a head like Roadses is wu'th a good deal."

"Who's this hyuh Um Paul, Mr. Punkin?" asked Ab. Risley's son, acting as spokesman for the younger generation, who were listening to the discussion.

"Well, Abby, he's th' 'boss dog in th' tanyard,' th' president, th' postmaster-gineral an' th' speaker ov th' house all rolled intuh one. He trims his whiskers like th' stock raisers over in Indianny, an' he's a kinder Free-Thinkin' Predestinarian. He ain't never had but one new suit ov close sence he's ben a grown man, but he gits a new beaver hat every six months. He's a Bore; now, I don't understand th' Bore langwidge, but I've heered 'em talk, an' it soun's like a corn sheller thet's choked up with a nubbin'.

"His subjec's calls him Um Paul, which, bein'

interperted, means Uncle Paul, but th' small boys, I s'pose, as they do ev'ywhar, calls him whiskers. He don't go t' th' 'naugurashun balls, 'r play whist, 'r make speeches from th' back flatform ov a cyar; but he's a great feller fuh talkin' polyticks with th' boys on th' front po'ch, an' bringin' out th' segyars an' beer an' sayin': 'Now, fellers, this is all yo's, paid fuh with yo' taxes; jes' scatter yo'selves all 'roun' hyuh an' do as y' please; an' when yuh mug gits empty, hol' up one finger t' th' bartender.' Sech 's thet, yuh know, keeps th' boys t'gether. Fuh instance, Hans Schnitznagel ov th' third ward, will come up an' slap Um Paul on th' back an' say: 'Ol' Socks, th' people down in my deestrick don't fancy yo' attytood on th' tariff.' 'Umph,' sez Paul, 'then I'll change it immedjitly now, ach Himmel.' Nex' a committee from th' Long Grass deestrick come up with a ca'f with six sets ov teeth, thet they want Paul t' christen; an' Um Paul goes out an' takes a beer with 'em ev'y time they say 'when.' An' when a torchlight percesshun come by th' house with pictyuhs ov Uncle Paul on th' transparrencies, he don't set a light in th' winder an' go in th' back room—oh, no—they've all got tuh come in an' git full t' th' muzzle, or else Uncle Paul feels slighted. An' th' consekence is he's a hard man t' beat in a convenshun. But he ain't

so accommodatin' t' them Britishers; when England wanted th' earth, he jes' sed t' th' butler:

" 'Yuh go down an' look under th' back stairs, an' get thet ol' ultymatum, an' give it t' them beef-eatin' Britishmen'; an' it done th' bizness. But th' bettin' on th' stock exchange is in favor of Great Brittun."

"What's he gone t' France fuh?" queried Heck Shamblin.

"T' git a taste ov absinthey," returned Tobe spitefully. "An' he'll be in shape t' go fuh them fellers when he gits back."

ACCORDING TO THE CODE.

I WAS a-settin' in my budrow th' other day, in th' gable end ov my barn, when I got a letter from my ol' frien' Tobe Punkin. I had a sorter hankerin' noshun thet Tobe was dead, but his letter sed not; an' fu'thermo', thet he wanted t' see me fo'thwith. 'Twas corn-shuckin' time, an' I was rushed, but I warn't a-goin' back on ol' Tobe. We'd ben fast an' true frien's fuh forty year; we had toddled aroun' t'gether when we was brats; we had nussed our stone bruises t'gether when we was kids; we had sparked th' same gals t'gether when we was young men; we had hid fuh two mont's t'gether in the Yaller Jacket Ma'sh t' keep from goin' t' th' war—but we did go—an' we had fin'lly run fuh th' Legislature 'g'inst each other, Tobe as a Granger an' me as a' Independent; an' 'nuther feller had come in an' licked us both, an' we had quit polyticks, separated an' settled down t' work.

But what could Tobe want with me? I cogi-

tated purty considerbl', but thar warn't no findin' out by cogitatin', so I packed my go-way-bag an' lit out fuh Swipesville. I reached thar in "due season," as th' Good Book sez, an' made straight fuh Tobe's house. I hollered up t' his room: "Tobe, hyuh's yuh ol' frien', Hirum, down hyuh, come down!" I heered somebody comin' with measured tread an' tremblin' step t' th' landin' 'bove th' stairs. That couldn' be Tobe; oh, no. But when Tobe come downstairs, th' picture of mis'ry an' despair, lookin' as ef he'd been run through a corn-sheller, I fell on his neck an' sed: "Tobe, confess it all t' Hirum."

"Oh, Hirum," sez he, "fuh ol' frien'ship's sake."

"Well," sez I, "what's th' matter; air ye a bankrupt?"

"Drat it, no."

"Lost any relytives lately?"

"Ah, no, Hirum; it's wu's 'n thet; I'm in love."

"Well, I'll say git out immejietly."

"Hirum, thet ain't th' worst ov it; a blarsted city dude has ben down hyuh, an' she ain't ben t' church with me fuh three meetin's."

"Umph! Ain't thar any mo' gals in Swipesville?"

"But, Hirum, she's sech a stunner."

"Kind ov a corker, is she?" I was puzzled t'

death, so I sez: "Well, what did yuh sen' fuh me fuh?"

'I've jes' challenged thet dude fuh a juel, an' yuh 've got t' act as my secind."

"Me! Act as second in a juel——! Not ef my name's what it uster be, an' I'll 'gree t' be chowdered up 'live ef it ain't."

"But, Hirum, yuh mus'; don' go back on me now."

"No," sez I, strainin' back a tear, "I'll be hanged ef I go back on yuh; I'll see yuh safely through."

We had dead loads ov trouble 'bout th' choice of weepons; Tobe was anxious t' fight with scythe blades, but I tol' him they might git hurt fightin' with them; an' besides th' dude had th' choice, as he had ben invited t' th' rat-killin'. Arfter a while we 'greed on ho'ss pistols. Tobe made his will, an' arfter much work writ th' follerin' lines which I was t' deliver t' th' young lady in case ov his death:

Theese is agony's lines; don't call 'em rude;
I'm out ov th' way; yuh kin marry the dood.

L folded 'em up an' laid 'em down; I have 'em yit.

Th' juel was t' be fought in th' middle ov

Jewly, in a low, swampy place, at trylight; an' th' muskeetoes met promp'ly at six fuh dress p'rade. I s'ggested thet both ov 'em lay thar quietly fuh a while an' thar wouldn't be no need ov a juel, they would both be bloodless corpses; but th' dude sed no, he perposed t' die like a man, an' not through th' arteshun efforts ov a muskeeto.

Th' other seckind was a long-haired feller in linsey woolsey britches, an' he made me nervous. We fin'lly got th' fighters in persishun. Tobe's pulses was makin' forty thousan' resolushuns a minnit, an' he was shakin' worse'n a aspen leaf. Th' dude was ca'm, but looked sorter pekid. We was 'bout t' give th' order t' fire when th' dude sed:

"I say, Mr. Second, is my necktie properly adjusted?"

"Yes," sed I, "a blamed sight straighter'n yo' head."

Then Tobe said:

"Hirum, sell my crap ov ruta-bages in th' highes' market, an' give th' proceeds t' Aunt Betsey."

"Yes," sed I. "Tobe, stan' firm—One, one—two (hang th' muskeeters). One, two——"

Then th' dude broke in:

"Why, my dear Mr. Pumpkin, you will make

a horrid looking corpse with that turn down collar on; why didn't you wear a Pickadilly; they're all the go this summer."

"Yuh go bag yo' head," sez Tobe.

"My dear sir, how rude you are on the brink of destruction."

"Gentlemen," sez I, "ready, aim, one, two—one, two (ouch)—one, two——"

"Mr. Pumpkin," broke in th' dude agin, "do turn up your trousers and tuck in your coat collar a little; your appearance puts my teeth on edge."

Then Tobe got spikeful, an' sed:

"Ef yuh don' like th' target, yuh needn' shoot at it."

At last I give th' order—"one, two, three, fire!" Th' pistols went off t'gether; Tobe fell with a thud. I rushed t' him, an' sez: "Oh, Tobe, git up, speak tuh me; say some'pn t' yuh ol' frien'; shorely yuh ain't dead. Oh, Tobe, git up, git up, up—up—up——. Hang it all, Marandy Swipes, ef yuh ever wake me out ov my afternoon nap agin I'll git a divorcement from yuh quicker'n gun's iron."

TOBE PUNKIN HAS HIS LIKENESS TOOK.

My ol' frien', Tobe Punkin, come t' me 'bout a week ago, an' he sed he was goin' t' hev his likeness took.

"Well," sez I, "Tobe, ef it's a good one, yuh'll never hev another one took."

Tobe sed he want'd t' hand it down t' prosperity, an' I guess thar's lots worse things than Tobe's picture handed down t' prosperity. So we got ourselves intuh shape an' went down t' th' photografer's. Tobe was in good sperrits fuh prosperity t' gaze on him. He had on the fly-away-duster he was marri'd in, an' a tall choker thet struck him just 'bove th' Adum's appl', so's every time he swallered his eye balls 'd swell up.

Tobe's wife s'ggested thet he hev th' picture took with him a-settin' down in a cheer with th' "Columbyun Cook Book" in his han', like ez

ef he was some sorter perfesshun'l man 'r member ov Congress.

The photografer was a mighty perlite man; he 'peared pertickler int'rested in gittin' Tobe comfort'bl'. Arfter some considerb'l projeckin' he got things fixed an' sot Tobe in a cheer, with his back t' th' skylight. I noticed a pained expresshun flit over Tobe's face when he was sot thar, but I thought it was all right.

Then th' man sez: "Set up straight an' look pleasant."

But Tobe tuk th' sickly grins. Sez I: "Tobe, yuh look like yuh did when yuh beat ol' man Ben Gimpkins in thet horse trade." An' Tobe bri'tened up, but he soon looked solemner'n a jedge agin.

Then th' picture man sez: "Really, sir, yuh won't be pleased with th' picture ef yuh don't beat thet."

I got behin' th' man an' sorter wunk at Tobe, but he only smiled 'bout as nice as ef somebody had let down th' bars an' turned th' cows in on the turnips.

Suddintly Tobe started t' git up. "Set still," sez th' man; "it's all right, 'ceptin' yuh face; yuh p-sishun's perfec', ef yuh'll only look pleasant."

An' Tobe sed: "All right, jes' 's yuh say."

But Tobe was sick. I could see thet. I hadn' never seen him in thet humor befo'. I cake-walked 'roun' th' aidge of th' room, tryin' t' git him persentabl', but 'twarn't no use; he got worse. Fin'lly I got mad'n sez:

"Hang it all, Tobe Punkin, yuh ain't a-goin' t' yuh own fun'ral; git yuhself in gear and hev it struck off."

Tobe kinder groaned an' sed:

"All right, Hirum, jes's yuh say. I'll do m' best, but this thing ov hevin' yuh picture took is awful; lots worse'n I had any idea."

He braced his-se'f, an' the' photograf man pulled a string, an' sez: "It's all over, suh."

Then ol' Tobe ra'red up an' sed:

"I'm mighty glad it is, fuh I couldn't a sot on thet tack a minnit longer t' save m' life."

CUPID'S LARK AT SMOKY GULCH.

My name is G. Aristarchus Gushington. You spell it—G. A-r-i-s-tarchus G-Gushington. I am just back from the West, yes. I am what people call a dude—not a rushing, gushing, squshing dude, but just a plain, ordinary, brainless dude.

Remembering that Horace Greeley had said: "Go west, young man, go west" (how clever of Horace), I went west; but when I arrived there everyone seemed to contradict Horace by saying, "Go east, young man, g-go east." I went west —and—I came east; yes, I always follow good advice. The west is a delightful place to live —if you were born and raised in Hoboken, it is.

How very unconsciously funny some people are; when I alighted from the train at Smoky Gulch I was pounced upon by at least a score of persons, who said they wished to add me to their collection of butterflies. There must have been

very great compliments implied, but I'm sure I couldn't see them. One rude fellow asked me if I had shed my outer bark before I came out, and I just up and told him in my maddest manner that I wasn't any chestnut, 'deed I wasn't. And some of those raw dogs actually plagued me so much that I had to threaten to resort to violence with them; and they desisted, too.

It is noteworthy that I have been extremely fond of the fair sex from my earliest boyhood; hence it was no matter of wonderment that I should have become involved in quite a number of episodes in which the "little winged wretch, Cupid," had no small share.

On my arrival the newspapers spoke favorably of me; and said that something had come into the city, but they didn't know whether it was a plus or a minus quantity—will some mathematician please explain?

I had no dfficulty in obtaining an entrée into the best society in Smoky Gulch. In a very short time I numbered the first men of the town among my most intimate friends. Greasy Jeems and I were well nigh inseparable; and Moon-eyed Ike and I were constant playmates. We used to play together every night, but I always lost, so I stopped playing with him. I had not been in the place very long when I received an

invitation to attend the "Eighth Annual Jump of the Smoky Gulch Cotillion Club." I attended, of course. How I *adore* dancing; and I had such a *delicious* time there. But I have not fully recovered from the jolting yet; and the last "gents-in-the-middle-and-hands-all-round" left my spinal column two inches out of plumb. After the final request to "swing corners," I found myself hanging on a rafter, with my mouth full of cobwebs. I detest cobwebs without wine sauce, so I quickly came down.

Then followed the supper, and I had the pleasure of leading out one of the most fetching creatures imaginable. Her name would not appear well on a card, but she was a diamond in the rough—Betsey Jane, from Silver Ridge, a girl with a future, so far as I was concerned. When I asked a fellow what kind of a girl Betsey Jane was, he said: "That ar gal—she kin hoe fo' acres of corn a day, an' handle a pack-axe worse'n a trip hammer." The horrid creature—the fellow, I mean.

We enjoyed a fine repast, consisting of cold souse, hardtack and cider; and as I slowly dissected my allowance of souse and listened to Betsey Jane tell about the time she fell down the ninety-foot shaft in the "Squedunk" mine,

I mentally concluded that Horace had indeed said a wise thing, when he said: "Go west, young man, go west."

I saw Betsey Jane home from the dance that night, and I did not get back to my home until sundown the next day. She lived nineteen miles down the Gulch.

Betsey Jane had created a lasting flame in my heart; it more than glowed; I thought of her day and night. If I asked the whip-poor-will his song, he whistled "Betsey Jane;" if I asked the brook, it babbled "Betsey Jane;" if I asked the water-mill, it laboriously ground out "Betsey Jane," and the lofty inspiration prompted the following touching, little poetical poem:

The world does without sunshine, also without rain,
But it could not get along without my Betsey Jane;
The rays of bright sunshine in their glittering train
Cannot hold a light to my Betsey Jane;
The stars hide their heads, they cannot remain,
When out peep the eyes of my Betsey Jane;
'Twill place a man where he'll never see daylight again,
One blow from the hand of my Betsey Jane.

O, come to me, spirit, and pray do explain,
What on earth I would do without my Betsey
Jane?

They used to call me "Ducky" out there; pretty name, but there was a savor of quackery about it that I never fancied. When I showed those verses to Betsey Jane, what do you think she said?

"Gosh, Ducky, that's goin' po'try; why don't yuh publish it in the *Hornpipe?*"

But I had to explain to my star of the west that the poetry was intended for her only.

My love affairs progressed very rapidly, and I soon set the date to propose to my Peerless Nugget of Silver Ridge. I shall never forget the evening. The setting sun had streaked the mountain side with bars of golden light; the wild flowers drooped under their burdens of evening dew; the river had ceased to roar, and was rushing silently on its way; the winds had even been lulled to rest; and all Nature seemed waiting to hear what I would say to Betsey Jane. As we reached the hilltop the moon began to peep from behind the clouds, and I said touchingly:

"Oh, Betsey Jane, isn't this a glorious moonrise?"

"Gosh, Ducky, it's tip-top."

And then I bethought me of Shakespeare, and said with Lorenzo:

" 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.' "

And Betsey Jane looked at me pityingly and said: "Sick, Ducky?"

Great Heavens, the first time in History that Shakespeare had gone back on a lover! Oh, Willie, your glory has fled.

"Do you remember the first time that I ever saw you, Betsey Jane?"

"Gosh, Ducky, reckon I do—down at the Jump that night at the Gulch; that's whar we eat so much souse, and I caught yuh an' swung yuh so—whoop-la, hold fast, Ducky!" And she gave me a savage swing.

"Don't do that any more, Betsey Jane," I said. "I suffer with heart disease."

We seemed to be swiniging off from the subject, so I drew a step nearer and said:

"The sun, moon and stars combined, would not shed light enough for me if your eyes did not shine."

"Oh, come off, Ducky, yuh' givin' me taffy."

"Indeed I am not, dearest Betsey Jane; listen, will you be mine?"

"Now, don't yuh think 'twould be more 'pro-

priate ef yuh was t' be mine, yuh dear little thing?"

We did not quarrel over that, but then came the task of asking Betsey Jane's pap; and, as he was as deaf as an adder and as ugly as a mud fence, I dreaded the job. But we went before him. He was sitting in his office on a nail keg, drinking some cough mixture out of a large bottle which he held in his hand.

"Good morning, sir," I said.

"Ya-a-s, right warm."

"Er—I said—good morning."

"Oh, yes, no doubt o' that."

"It's just a little damp this morning."

"Cramp—I allus use a mustard plaster."

"Oh, dear sir, I want your daughter."

"Water—yuh'll find some right over thar in the cooler."

"Confound it, I want your daughter, your ado-o-rable daughter."

"Cold water, yes, jes' fetched up from th' spring."

"May I have Betsey Jane?"

"Wet rain; they air allus wet in this kentry."

I was just on the verge of committing suicide, when Betsey Jane came to my assistance and explained matters, and the old man said:

"Ya-a-as, take her off my hands. I'm tarnation glad t' git rid of her."

I took her, or she took me, and we were made one, came east and settled down. Now, Betsey Jane may have said that I would be hers, but I will have you to understand that I run things to suit myself in my house—hush!

"You, Aristarchus Gushington, if you don't come in and mind this baby while I go to the meeting of the Daughters of Adam, you'll catch it."

There, she is calling me now, and, like an obedient husband, I must obey.

THE LAST BANQUET.

Oh, I have the heaviest head you ever saw. It is, I should judge, only a trifle smaller than Mark Hanna's. I spent last evening at the Bachelor's Club. We have such jolly times at the Club dinners. That is, I guess they do; this is my first; I have not always been a bachelor.

This dinner was to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Columbus, or Pharoah, or Mrs. Lease, or some of them, I do not remember which —exactly. It doesn't make any difference about that; we did it in orthodox style. There were a great many ladies present that evening: that was the only thing that kept it from being a full-blooded bachelors' dinner. I went stag; there were lots of other fellows who went stag —deer boys. There were lots of girls who also went stag; and when dinner was ready we made up quite a number of extra couples out of those odds and ends stags.

I paired with a lady of the vintage of '69, from Kansas City or Quebec, or some other seaport. She was the most interesting person I have ever met. I could not look at her, even, without being amused. And when she opened her mouth to speak—ye Pharisees, it was like the cataract at Lodore, or the whirpools at Niagara. We got along so nicely together. She suited me exactly. I don't know how I suited her. I never asked. She would rattle away, and once in every eight minutes it would be my turn, when I would run in and say, "I guess so," or "possibly," or something of the nature, which exclamations indicate intense listening power. Then it wouldn't be my turn any more for eight minutes. Occasionally, when she would kind of stop to catch her breath and draw in a long sigh, I would take this opportunity to say, "Beg pardon," so as to hear her say it all over again. This was to prevent its getting any worse. We shuffled along through the edibles. She didn't eat much for fear she would have to cease talking; and I ate but little for fear she would not stop.

We had a feast of reason. We discussed Luetgert, the sausage man, and appendicitis, and coco-cola, and home rule, and free silver, and Webster Davis, and most anything that came

up. Then the champagne came on. I made up my mind to drink only one glass—champagne, like knowledge, always goes to my head. I never had *anything* to reverse me so completely and so thoroughly.

After drinking for some moments, the conversation grew interesting to a fault. It gurgled on something like this:

"Mr. Prune, Napoleon Bonaparte was a remarkable man, was he not?"

"Oh, yes, one of the most remarkable men I ever met."

"*You,* met h-i-m?"

"Oh, yes, I met him at a corn-shucking at the Waldorf-Astoria about sixty years ago."

"*Where?*" in great consternation.

"At a restaurant in Egypt, in the streets of Cairo. He took braised beef; I took mine straight."

"But you said you had met him in New York, at the Waldorf-Astoria."

"No, no, you are mistaken; it was in Rio Janeiro that I said I met him, on a ferry-boat; he was distributing hand-bills."

"But, Mr. Prune, you are surely joking——"

"No, no, not at all; I certainly met him at Long Branch this summer—that is what I said first."

"Well," said she, giving up the fight, "I am one of his warmest admirers."

"Whose?"

"Why, Napoleon's, of course."

"Who's he?"

"Dear me, you just said you had met him."

"I beg your pardon, is he a friend of yours?"

"No, he died long before I was born."

"One of the seven wise men, evidently."

Here I took another sip. It did seem as if that glass would never give out. (I learned this morning that the waiter kept filling the glass as I drank from it, and that was the way of it; I must have drunk a barrel and a half.)

Just as General Thunder finished his speech, she said:

"He's a hero of Gettysburg, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes, I was there."

"How interesting. What position did you occupy?"

"I was in the family circle, behind a pompadour."

(Another sip; the glass was still full.)

Then everything began to multiply. The man sitting opposite me winked thirty-six eyes. I counted the lights on the chandelier; there were thirty-six thousand of them. About three miles

away I heard a voice say, as if from outer darkness:

"Mr. Prune will now respond to the sentiment, 'The Bachelors' Club.' "

I have a vague recollection of rising to my feet, though my feet might as well have been at home for the service they were to me. I rallied around my subject, however. I do not pretend to remember what I said, but the papers have it something like this:

"Old Bachelors and Old Maids: It gives me most exquisite delight to see so many of you present this evening. I look around me upon the multitude and estimate the gathering at seventy-seven thousand, horse, foot and dragoons. Where did you come from? I hail Columbus the Father of his Country; damn the torpedoes, go on with the performance. I am proud of the fact that I was born a bachelor. I desire no better epitaph than, 'Here lies a bachelor—Hic-cup jacet.' This is a glorious occasion; never since the burning of Rome have I seen such a hot time. I feel that I must now bid you good-bye. I am floating away into airy nothingness; I weigh just four ounces, scant measure. How I have fallen off since I came in. I declare, I can scarcely identify myself; if it was not for my corns I would think I was my Cousin

Benjamin. I have just passed the moon on my way North. I shall sight Mars about daybreak. How I am traveling; I can't see you at all; there is confusion before my eyes, green lights, red lights, bologna sausages, hoop-snakes, scotch herrings, thunder and lightning, fireworks—a long farewell."

It may have happened so; I neither deny nor affirm.

MY SUMMER GIRL.

I HAVE just finished spending the summer and eighteen months' salary at Saratoga. Saratoga is a most gorgeous retreat for spending summers and salaries. My great-grandfather once spent a season there, and the family records say that he came home with a box of menu cards and three paper collars. He afterwards went into delirium, and during his ravings said nothing but "Keep off the grass" and "Don't pull the shrubbery." The sins of the fathers were visited even unto the fourth generation, and I transgressed last summer. From the present condition of finances it will be at least four generations before another one of us can venture.

I had heard a vast deal about Saratoga chips —in fact, a gambler once told me that he merely went there for the sake of the chips. They are very delightful, but so delicate. I found by actual measurement that it would take two hundred and thirty-three thousand of them piled

one on top of another to make a pile half an inch in thickness; and they have twice the hardness of iron and three times the transparency of glass. In July they are worth eight cents apiece at Saratoga.

I had a lovely room just over the kitchen. It pained me eleven dollars a day. I used to ascend and descend by means of the food-waiter. I ruined a brand new suit of cream flannels one evening coming down with a mess of corned beef and cabbage which a man from Cincinnati had ordered.

The waiters there are great institutions, too. They draw a salary of nine dollars a month, and can safely count on thirty-seven thousand dollars per annum in tips. The head waiter owns three bushels of diamonds in his own right; and he once told me confidentially that he would not swap places with the Mikado of Japan. One waiter there would not take his tip unless the check was certified. This man's cheek, however, always passed for its face value without certification.

The day after I arrived there I arose very early and took a stroll around the grounds of my hotel. On my way in I met a dear creature, a French maid, and I said in my softest French, which is very pliant:

"Bon jour, ma chère."

And she throttled me by gasping:

"Another gud man gone wrong."

It is the nature of some men to fall in love, no matter where they may be. They would languish and droop like the faded pansy without some member of the gentler sex to talk gush to. That is the class to which I do not belong—only sometimes. There are times, however, that try men's hearts, just as there are times that try men's souls. Mine was young and tender, and the inevitable followed. I could not help it; perhaps I shall know better next time, but this is doubtful.

I had known her only three days when I was fully convinced that my very existence depended upon an affirmative answer from her lips. She was a Miss Van Burnside, from Boston, and was redolent of the culture of that Athens of America. One evening, after a glorious waltz, I led her into the conservatory, and prepared to learn my fate—may I never learn anything worse. The last picture haunts my vision, and it becomes clearer every year. She was gorgeously attired, and was the capstone of a perfect mountain of roses and azalias and fuchias and geraniums and the like.

I never was so struck with my diffidence as at

this moment. The passage between my brain and my tongue seemed in some way hopelessly closed. I would think one thing and say something else that belonged back in the dynasty of Seti the Second. She knew more than I did—at least, she had a better way of showing it, because you really cannot tell what I know by what I say, fortunately.

I fanned her for three minutes as hard as I could, and then I remarked that it was warm.

Then she made one of those neat little puns which so characterize women of culture, and said:

"Yes, the mercury stands high this evening."

I pretended to catch on and smiled. You know, we smile very often when we do not catch on. I do not know why, but we do.

She asked me if I liked Emerson.

"Oh, yes," I said, "wonderful fellow, that Edison; that phonograph is a most remarkable invention."

She caught on, but did not smile.

"Aren't you fond of Beethoven?" she asked.

"Beethoven, y-a-as, isn't he cute? I'll declare, some of his witticisms are almost equal to Bill Nye's. E-r-r—were you ever in love, Miss Van Burnside?"

"Well, the term love may be used in so many

different senses that I can scarcely frame an answer. Do you remember what Confucius said about love?"

"No, I don't remember, but it must have been something nice."

"Let's talk about something else."

"Yes, surely, certainly, with pleasure—nice *blanc mange* for dinner?"

"Yes."

"Quite a pretty room, this?"

"Yes."

"So broad?"

"Yes."

"So harmonious?"

"Yes."

"So, er er——"

"Yes."

"So comfortable?"

"Y-e-e-e-s."

"Reminds me of a poem I wrote some time ago:

If some fine day I had to drop
From a million miles above,
And had to choose where to alight,
I think I'd fall in love.

"That's nice; how long were you in writing that?"

"Four weeks; it gave me considerable trouble."

"I should imagine so."

"Er, Miss Hattie, I wish you would listen to me; I haven't eaten anything for three days for thinking of you."

"That isn't much of a fast; George Francis Train fasted more than forty days."

I grew desperate:

"Darling, your eyes are the light of my existence."

"What ails the sun?"

"Without you I would languish and die."

"Then your friends would grieve."

"Upon your answer hangs my fate."

"Then I am afraid it will hang until it is dead, dead, dead, and may——"

"You are divine."

"No, only things heavenly are divine."

"You are heavenly."

"Then I must be divine."

The thermometer was rapidly going down to zero; I rang for my arctics and overcoat. With a grand final effort, I braced myself:

"My only hope of happiness in life depends upon an affirmative answer from your lips; you must tell me that you love me; I will——"

And there was a Voice, hard and cruel, which came upon me in my tribulation, saying:

"Miss Van Burnside, I believe this next is our two-step."

MONSIEUR ZERO.

ZERO! ZERO! a queer name, you say? Seems to savor of an aching void, as it were. Well, I am a queer fellow. Where's the pleasure in living if you are like everybody else in this world? Preserve your originality at all hazards, even if it verges on the idiotic.

The people in my native town used to say that my upper story was sadly damaged and badly in need of repair, but, of course, for "sweet charity's sake" you will believe nothing of the kind. I know that I do not look as if I had three grains of sense, but I have a friend who is a physican, and he says that I have four grains, *so there!*

Let me tell you about a wonderful pun that I perpetrated before I was out of my teens. I was rushing a girl—think of it, I rushing a girl—and a rival remarked on one occasion that Zero was below par. In my most sarcastic vein I

returned that it was a cold day when you got below zero. The assembled company said that it was one on me. Do you see it that way? I thought the remark exceedingly appropriate.

I hang around the most attractive watering places all summer, and swim, and drive, and walk, and run, and flirt, so as to get rid of the superfluous flesh which accumulates in the winter. Maybe you would not believe it, but it is true that at one time I actually weighed a hundred and twenty pounds. I was very portly.

Strange way, though, in which I lost my flesh. It was from fright. Do I look scared? Yes. for once, strange to say, I lost my self-possession. It was in the North, way up North; it was a hard winter, and ice was here, and ice was there, and ice, in fact, was everywhere. And all of the pedestrians resembled snow kings, except, of course, those who resembled snow queens; and as I was constantly braving the storm, my friends referred to me as Jack Frost.

One evening, after a particularly cold day, I retired early. I slept. How long I had purloined sweets from the coffers of Morpheus I know not, but I was suddenly awakened by the sound of bells. There were breakfast bells, and dinner bells, and summer bells, and winter bells, and bells of uncertain age, and even Christmas

bells; but finally through the melody there came the dreadful realization that they were *fire bells.* As it was considerably after six in the afternoon, I hurriedly attired myself in evening dress and proceeded to the scene of carnage, hurling pedestrians right and left in my terrific march down the street.

I found it to be the Argosy Hotel which was on fire—thirteen stories high, and not a cent of insurance; ugh! It was one seething mass of flame. And to show you how some people will indulge in levity upon any occasion, I actually found the firemen playing upon the fire with the hose when I got there. Frightful!

My first impulse was to do all the good that I could—all that came within my reach—just suppose we all did that. The way to Jericho would not be half as rough, and Jordan would not be such a hard road to travel.

Through the blinding gusts of smoke I saw the leaping flames gliding in sinuous folds here and there, quietly, yet fiercely enfolding the filagree work in its dreadful embrace. The very stars seemed pale and weak and blinded by the crimson glare, and the moon stood like a lesser light and mournfully watched destruction's revel.

And then I philosophized that Zero should keep cooler than ever. I heard a wail of despair.

I glanced upward, and saw a pallid face at the eighth-story window. I hurriedly adjusted my glasses and scaled a ladder. There I found a maiden lady of uncertain age—one of those "unappropriated blessings" that Washington Irving speaks of in his famous "Farewell Address." She had a Thomas cat in one hand and a Polly parrot in the other.

Said I: "Madam, take my hand."

"Oh, it's what I have been waiting for, for, lo, these many years."

"Really, madam, you misunderstand me. I was not—come on, or you will be burned to death."

Dropping both birds with a spasmodic effort, she said:

"Let us die together."

"Really, madam, I—er—you misunderstand me. I have no desire to be cremated, unless I thought that like the bird of fable I should arise from my ashes; and the contemplation of being offered a living sacrifice upon the altar of your entrancing whims is not at all pleasant."

I handed her to a fireman, and she went below. Of course she was not killed; if she had been she would not have gone below. I went on in my work of rescue, through the stifling smoke up two more stories. I found no one. Up, up, higher, higher, until I reached the thirteenth

floor. From room to room I passed, and finally, hearing a noise, ran to No. 1314. Thinking that I should have the glory of saving a fellow mortal from passing in his checks, I plunged against the door and battered it down. I found a young man who had just begun taking elocution lessons. When the hotel was fired he also became fired with a desire to recite. I threw a blanket around him and attempted to lead him out. But with a backward leap he stood erect and said:

"'When shall we three meet again?
In thunder, lightning, or in rain,
When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won?"'.

"Man, you are daft; come with me; you will surely die if you do not."

"Then will they say, those friends of mine, 'after life's fitful fever he sleeps well'; nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."

"If you don't come with me I must force you."

"*You,* force *me!*

"'Now in the name of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this, our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?'"

"Stop and come, if you value your life," I cried.

"'England's sun was slowly setting, at the close of one sad day.'"

"Let old Curfew ring, my friend, and come."

"'Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the ramparts we hurried.'"

"I am sorry, but you can't do Sir John Moore any good; he is long ago defunct."

"'It was the schooner Hesperus
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.'"

Just then the flames burst in from every side; amid the falling of timbers, the flying of sparks and the flickering of flames, I could see him spring to the top of a table; and from it he thundered the well-known lines:

"Forward, the Light Brigade,
Charge for the guns, he said;
Into the valley of death
Rode the Six Hundred."

Closer and closer the fury came; the flames actually enwrapped us. The claw hammers of my coat were burned off; the eyes had melted from my glasses; all avenues of escape were cut off, but still I hoped to save him. I sprang toward the young man; now I could see nothing; but above all the din I could hear very distinctly:

"Cannon to the right of them,
Cannon to the left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volleyed and thundered;
Storrrrmed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rrrrrrrode and well,
Into the valley of death,
Into the mouth of hell,
RRRRRRRRRRRRode the Six Hundrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrred."

"Bang! Bang!!!!!!! Bang!!!!!!!!!!!!"

What could that be? Heavens, I could not move. "Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang" (yawning); oh, yes, it's my valet waking me up, and there hasn't been any fire after all.

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

OH, DEAR, "life is a waste of wearisome hours, which seldom the rose of enjoyment adorns." Tommy Moore said that—I do adore Tommy Moore; he is so sentimentally sweet. (Oh, dear.) Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness. I have been tantalized nearly to death. Oh, why did I not die when I was teething? (Oh, dear.) I would I were a happy jaybird, that I might have nothing to do but chirp "The Star Spangled Banner" from morning till eve from the topmost bough of a high tree. (Oh, dear.) I am not a new woman, and I hope you will not consider me an old woman. There's nothing new under the sun. My name's Jenkins; I spell it with a G, G soft. I have a brother whose name is Jenkins also; he is a musician; he spells his name with a G, G flat. I am a dreadfully wicked fellow; yes, my besetting sin is corn muffins. I ate three last even-

ing for tea, but the circumstances were extenuating; I was very hungry. (Oh, dear.)

You should have heard a conversation that I and I would not have missed it for two worlds; and I would not have missed it for two worlds; if I tell it I know I shall be killed, and if I don't tell it I know I shall die. Dead, roasted. (Oh, dear.) Just imagine how it sounds at a dining, to have some one say:

"Will you have some of the roast, Jenkins?" (Oh, dear.) If I am to be cooked, I prefer to be fried with an abundance of gravy. But I must tell you my secret. I know you won't tell—here goes. I have an Aunt Jane. She is a very nice aunt, but she was not born yesterday, nor the day before, either. She has heard it thunder; I guess she has also seen it hail; and has witnessed an aurora borealis and a total eclipse or two. But she has chosen to walk through life alone thus far. (Oh, dear.) Think of it.

Last summer at camp meeting she met an old veteran, an officer, General Principles. It was a case of love at first sight—not at first sight, either, but rather at first hearing. He heard Aunt Jane lead the choir in "Come ye disconsolate," and he said it reminded him so much of Marathon and Leuctra and Waterloo and

Gettysburg, and those places, that he could not resist.

I have just heard his proposal. (Oh, dear.) I was concealed behind the curtains in the bay window, unintentionally of course. When the general was ushered in he came into the parlor something like this:

"Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, column right—halt. Right face, break ranks."

Aunt Jane enters. "Attention." The general salutes.

"Be seated, general," said Aunt Jane. "Nice morning."

"Ah, truly, on just such a day did Napoleon gather his forces at Waterloo, where my Uncle Benjamin commanded the Eighth Grenadiers."

"You seem to be fond of war, general."

"Madam, I adore it so that I am continually at war with myself."

"Ah?"

"Madam, I have come this evening to storrrrm the citadel of your heart. I have gathered my forces in martial array; on the right I have my infantry; in the centre my artillery; and on the left my cavalry. As a reserve I have the 'Heavy Brigade.' I am about to move. Remember, 'the Old Guard dies, but never surrenders.'"

Aunt Jane was frightened, but she managed to stammer:

"You have taken me by surprise, general."

"A most brilliant point of generalship, madam. Forward the skirmish line; I have loved you long; I fell at the first fire."

"Why, general, I had not dreamed of such a thing."

"Load; ready, aim, fire, forward, sharpshooters; load, continue firing. Madam, what do you say?"

"Let me consider, general."

"Never; infantry, forward, double time, march; will you be mine?"

"General, won't you give me until to-morrow; just one day, I implore you."

"Not one moment; load and continue firing; madam, I will now order a terrific fire from my infantry—will you surrender?"

"Oh, general, how can you?"

"You will not evacuate the fort; then stand from under the cavalry; forward; here they come in a gallop. Watch their flashing sabres. Charge with drawn sabres. By the ghost of Napoleon Bonaparte, I demand the surrender of your heart."

"Oh, you frighten me, general."

"Then you surrender?"

"Oh, no—— I——"

"Forward, the light artillery; load with grape shot and bologna sausages. Bring on the battering rams and the Gatling guns. Madam, the most magnificent army the world has ever seen is before you. See it. I stand at the head. Will you surrender, or shall I be forced to order a grand charge? Your life is in your hands. Will you be my wife?"

"Wait until to-morrow, general; I must have time."

"No, you have defied me long enough; I will now charge. Infantry, fix bayonets; cavalry, draw sabres; charge. The muskets are rattling; the sabres are clashing; and the light artillery is roaring; on they come, and above them all, do you hear the thunder of the heavy artillery. Forward, right wheel, charge, by platoons, by companies, by battalions, by regiments, by brigades, by divisions, by corps. The bands are playing, the heavens are rent in twain. Ah, this is war—'Charge, Chester, charge; on, Stanley, on.' I am Joan of Arc, Old Maid of New Orleans. Forward the Mulligan Guards. By the Burnside whiskers of Julius Cæsar's grandfather, I demand an unconditional surrender!!!"

"I su-u-u-render."

"Ah, a magnificent victory; 'disperse, ye rebels, and go to your homes.'"

And then the general drew nearer, placed his huge moustache very close to Aunt Jane's cheek, and said:

"May I seal the surrender?"

And Aunt Jane looked up with a smile that she had been saving for many years against that day, and said:

"*Oh, dear.*"

UNCLE WILLIAM'S WILL.

I AM in very deep trouble. A mile of trouble, more or less. Certain people are very angry with me, but I am as innocent as any other lamb who was ever innocent. I told an old lady that once, and she remarked that I looked sheepish. It was very bad for a woman of her age, and I told her so. (I thought it exceedingly funny.)

I'm very bashful; it's dreadful to be that way, but then, of course, if you are built that way you can't help it. I have a Cousin Benjamin; I would certainly like for you to meet him. He's bashful, too. (I think that exceedingly funny.)

I spent last summer in the mountains. I don't remember just what mountains they were, but I'm sure they must have been made from mole hills, from what transpired there. (I thought it exceedingly funny.) The summer previous I spent in the Adirondacks; my Cousin Benjamin said he expected to buy the Adirondacks; I said,

"Yes, why don't you go by them; I have several times." (I thought it exceedingly funny.)

But I must tell you about my trouble. When I went to the mountains last summer (to get fat) I found everybody up there ready to swallow me whole. (I thought it exceedingly funny.) Of course, this boa constrictor style of affection was entirely new to me; and hence I marvelled at it greatly. Thirty-six porters fought savagely over my baggage at the train, and when I reached the hotel my handbag was a wreck. My curling irons were literally torn in twain—mark that! I was shown the best room in the house, and when I went to sit down at dinner I could not sit down for waiters.

Waiters, waiters, everywhere,
Nor any bite to eat.

I could not understand it at all. I was reasonably sure that they did not take me for Li Hung Chang; and as it was a strong silver country, I hardly imagined that my credentials had gotten mixed up with those of Grover Cleveland. The young ladies stared at me, and the old ones viewed me with approval. Everybody seemed anxious to meet me, and I was soon presented to them all. Invitations began to pour in faster

than I could accept. It was impossible to keep enough clean collars on hand. And I was at a loss how to ring in the changes that the place demanded.

Mrs. Van de Broomstraw, who there with her eldest daughter, seemed especially interested in me. I was honored with an invitation to sit at their table. The first morning that I went into breakfast there she said:

"Good morning, Mr. Prune. How did you rest last night, after your dissipation?"

"Oh, I beg pardon, yes, I thank, yes, indeed, I did, I did, I did, I did, I did, I did, I did——"

And then we began to eat. I always preferred to eat by myself. Not that I object to company, but then a bashful man is lost at the table.

"Mr. Prune, isn't this the most delicious mountain trout you ever tasted?"

"Yes, yes, of course, of course, that is—er—er—I have never tasted any before."

"Do you like opera, Mr. Prune?"

I was seized with a violent fit of coughing. "Will somebody please slap me on the back? Er—what was your last remark, Mrs. Van de Broomstraw? Oh, yes, yes, the mountain trout—certainly, that is, yes, to be sure, I have never tasted any, don't you know?" Just then I jogged

the waiter's elbow, and a rice croquette fell with a sickening thud on Mrs. Van de's neck.

"Why you have sent down a shower of rice, Mr. Prune."

"Yes, yes, I wish you good luck. (I thought it exceedingly funny.) Excuse me, I beg your pardon."

I took my meals in my room for three days. On the morning of the fourth day there came an invitation to attend a picnic up the mountain side. I thought I should go. Visions of pies, and chicken, and deviled eggs, and red ants, and briars and all sorts of things danced before my eyes.

I started out with Mrs. Van de Broomstraw, in her phaeton. We had gone about a mile, I guess, when she said:

"Mr. Prune, I think you are wonderfully clever."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, then—I'll give you a trade as soon as I get one."

"Mr. Prune, I have often wondered that you did not marry."

"Why, Mrs. Van de Broomstraw, you are growing facetious. What on earth put that notion in your head?"

"But, really——"

"Oh, that's a capital joke. (Oh, that is ex-

ceedingly funny.) I'll have to ask my father, don't you know?"

A shade of sadness passed over her face, and for an instant, but only so long, she "wore a worried look," but she soon recovered and said:

"Oh, you are joking, you sly dog. I have heard that you were lately the possessor of untold millions——"

"My dear madam, someone has certainly been imposing upon you; this is simply too ridiculous. Why, I barely have a change of shirts; it's so." The secret was out.

"But is it not a fact that a half-brother of your father's died and left a handsome fortune to you?"

"Ho, ho, ho; ha, ha, ha; he, he, he—that's a good one on you—ho, ho, ho. (Oh, that's exceedingly funny.) I'll tell you how that was. My Uncle William's half-brother died; Uncle William was a stepson of my aunt's brother-in-law. We used to call him Uncle William when he came to our house to keep him from feeling badly about it; but he was very fond of me, and always said that he would remember me in his will. When he departed this life we found that he had provided for his three brothers in the West, and I was to get what was left after each one of his brothers' descendants received two

hundred dollars apiece. All three brothers had married in Utah in the Brigham Young days, and there were ninety-two children and four hundred and twelve grandchildren to be looked out for. When it came to me, I had eight dollars and sixty cents—think of it."

"I guess, Mr. Prune," she said, as the air got cold and damp, "you had best get out and walk."

And I did so, but I thought it exceedingly funny.

THE BACHELOR'S LAMENT.

I.

BACHELOR?

Yes.

From choice?

Someone's.

Who did it?

She. It was all a mistake. Dinner parties are abominations. I hate them. I have cause to do so.

Explain?

Yes, with pleasure. Listen; I was born bashful; I grew near-sighted; I became deaf. Don't you see the finish? Need I proceed?

II.

An invitation; a dress suit; the odor of flowers; a seat next to *her;* an appointment on the balcony.

Hurrah!
No, not yet.
Why?
It isn't time; we are not out of the woods.

III.

Polly, pretty name.
Loved her long?
Ten years.
So much?
Not half enough.
Great mystery?
Huge.
Engaged?
Pretty near, once. "Many a slip."

IV.

Time flies; my date; I retire; I seek the balcony.

She there?

Yes.

Good.

Ahem, aheeem, ahe-e-e-e-e-m. No answer; draw near—ahe-e-e-e-m; still silence.

I remark: "There's the moon; funny, isn't it?"

She says: "Full, I guess; has company."

I reply: "Last quarter, even as you and I. All alone?"

All alone (regretfully).

Enjoying yourself?

I was.

Like funerals?

Some.

Personal?

I suppose.

I enter: "I've been thinking——"

Strange. (So was her voice.)

Be mi-i-i-ne?

Echo.

Fifteen per week.

Not so bad.

V.

Not a poet, but:

I look—your face—lovely—fair;
Behold! powder—clustered—there;
Greatest—crime—above—ground,
To be a "bach," you—around;
Think—of—single—years—spent;
Money—too—quick—repent.
I kneel—floor—rough—on—knees—
Trousers gone—certainly freeze—

Crawl—best—pants—miles;
Bask—in—light—your—smiles.
Look, Polly, head—this—way,
Hurry—speak—what you're—to say;
Don't say—no—peerless—queen,
Create on this balco—scene.
I think of what—I'm going—to do;
Will—my—wages—hold—two?
Now—you—'re going—to—speak—beware,
Lest I fling—brink—despair.
Lips—parted, speak—desire,
Jimpson's—sake—Mrs. Jimpson, Esquire.

Funny; yes, but wait, there's more.
Did she accept?
Not much.
What do you think? It was not *she.*
She was a floor higher, balco above.
Did she hear?
Every word.
Could I explain?
Not in a thousand years.
And the other?
She simply laughed.
Cruel, oh, so much so, don't you know.

THE MODERN METHUSELAH.

(A MS. Found in the Portmanteau of a Blase Man.)

I AM a thousand years old and, like most young ladies of sweet sixteen, have never been kissed. I know that lines indicating the thoughtless frivolity of youth are visible upon my brow, and that I do not look more than six hundred, but Father Time, as he gently strokes his Burnsides, tells me that I am a thousand in the shade. To show you, however, that I am not bowed down with grief and care, and that I am thoroughly sound on the financial question, look—and you will see no silver threads among the gold.

In all my checkered existence I have never tortured mankind; I have never sung a solo; I have never talked silver; I have never thought I was handsome; I have never carried a cane; and I have never written a sentimental poem. While sojourning in China, some four hundred years ago,

chipping relics off the Great Wall, my Chinese friends heard that I had led this blameless life, and gave me a handsome suit of clothes fitted out in point lace and diamonds. I have worn the costume only twice since, viz.: at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth and the baptism of Pocahontas.

I spend my summers at the North Pole and my winters in the Desert of Sahara, making "footprints on the sands of time." I usually spend the "long season in May" seated on a horn of the Aurora Borealis, throwing icicles at the North Star.

In my early days I aspired to political honors, and courted the popularity showered upon me. As a reward for my diligence I was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Mogus Plenipotentiary to the Moon; but I soon became moonstruck and was recalled.

Next I opened a peanut stand in Genoa, and have often sold fresh Spanish peanuts to Christopher Columbus, when old Mr. Columbus had had a good month carding wool. One evening Christopher came to me and told me that he was going to discover something. "All right," said I, "Kit, go in and win." And to-day you see the result of my advice. Thank *me* for your nation.

When times grew dull in Italy I went to England, arriving there about the time that Willie Shakespeare was writing his plays. All England was wild over poetry. I invented the Baconian cipher, though I never mentioned it to Mr. Donnelly. I assisted Willie in writing "Lend Me Five Shillings."

And then—well, what then? Ah! I fell in love. Adam was the only man who never fell —in love, I mean—and he had greatness thrust upon him.

She was beautiful, ethereal, poetical and graceful, and do you wonder that I bowed to her charms? I was young, only seven hundred and two at the time, and did not realize the magnitude of the undertaking.

It was at a wine supper that I met the lady—a wine supper given by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Walter Raleigh, the day after he permitted her to walk over his "Raglan." Elizabeth introduced her as Drusilla Vane, one of her maids of honor. I fell at the first fire, though Drusilla did not seem to stumble. I gazed upon her with all of the looks of love that six hundred and seventy-five years of experience had taught me; but she persisted in staring as vacantly at me as if I had been a whitewashed wall or a goose egg.

I was about to give up in despair, when an opportunity came for me to extinguish Elizabeth, distinguish myself, and stand pat with Drusilla Vane. There was no waiter in sight, so Queen Elizabeth leaned over to help herself to chicken salad for the fourth time, and in an instant the enormous ruff around her neck caught fire. It did seem for a moment as if the English throne was about to be declared vacant, but I seized a bottle of Rhine wine and put out the flame, just as Sir Walter Raleigh was about to throw on his cloak. The exploit was noticed by Drusilla, who rewarded me with a smile. I felt that my fortune was made; I was in the very seventh heaven of delight, perched upon a minaret of glory.

After the wine was drunk we sauntered out into the grounds, and 'twas there beneath the rose tree she tore my young heart into shreds.

"Od's bodikins," I swore, "the human heart is a great thing."

"Gad's life," quoth she, "Sir John Harvey has discovered that it doth pump the blood through the veins and arteries."

"O, damn Sir John Harvey," I ventured; "I was speaking sentimentally, and not physiologically."

"Gadzooks, you are sentimental, are you?"

"By my halidom, yes—the sky is bedecked with myriads of stars to-night."

"Egad, yes, about the usual number out."

"Faith, is it not wonderful how such a change can come over a wight in such a short time?"

"It is indeed," quoth she sweetly; "I have caught cold since I have tarried here."

My love darts were glancing as if they had been hitting steel, but I persevered. Egad, the wench was a tartar withal.

"Drusilla," I faltered, "a name such as might have been lisped by the gods themselves."

" 'Slife, do the gods lisp?"

"I trow not, but I have been told that they weep. Listen, Drusilla. For seven long centuries I have been longing for someone to love."

"Then, I swear you have longed long."

"Yes, and I long to long no longer."

"I prithee, no; it isn't healthy."

"Drusilla, dost consider:

For hundreds of years I've toiled and tried
To find a good maiden to be my own bride;
Now, all these years have I waited, alas!
To find you, like the rest, will me have to pass;
I'll cease this wandering from post to pillar
If you will consent to be my Drusilla.

Her answer was:

Zounds, old fossil, I believe what you say,
And wish I could extend you of hope a mere ray;
But mother did tell me, e'er since life began,
To be very careful in choosing a man;
Tho' the burdens of life and its cares you may carry;
Od's life, egad, you're too young to marry.

I left her under the rose tree, and she is probably there yet. I quietly bade Elizabeth good-night. That has been three hundred years ago. In those three hundred years I have helped Greece gain her indepndence; I have fought with Garibaldi in Italy; I have followed Wellington over the bogs of Belgium in search of Napoleon; I have eaten hardtack with Washington at Valley Forge; I trailed after Zack Taylor into the City of Mexico; and I have given the "rebel yell" on the field of Gettysburg; but the heart of a woman has been to me as a sealed book.

THE MAN WHO SAT WITH ME.

A FEW weeks ago I took a trip down the country on the Puff, Puff line which limps between Stumptown and Shiloh. If a man is not in a hurry the Puff, Puff was built for him. Adhering strictly to the good old notions of decorum and propriety, it is not inclined to be fast. My Uncle Alexander used to be an engineer on this road, and it is a notorious fact that he did not get over as much ground in a year as the average lightning rod agent in North Carolina.

It was dusty; I did not care to walk, so I caught the train. I walked on in a graceful, unobtrusive manner, took an out-of-the-way seat where I felt sure I would not be molested, and commenced amusing myself, as I usually do while travelling, by digging cinders out of my eyes and watching the intelligent flies work out their Euclid on the window panes.

After I had been thus musing for some moments, and was thoroughly satisfied with the

world in general and creation in particular, I felt a light tap on the shoulder. Being of a timid nature, I turned with a little shriek, to see what the excitement was. I heard a voice say: "Is this seat engaged?" which, being interpreted, means: "Get on the other side, I'm going to sit down."

Then the owner's face came within the range of my vision. He had a very striking face; I do not remember when anything struck me so forcibly before. He was ugly, a homely word, but facts are stubborn things. He was not ugly by accident, or from sin, but purely and solely from principle. I made room; he sat down; I grew faint. Now, onions look well growing in a garden, but they are bad neighbors.

The stranger mopped his face with a bandana, which left him blushing like a full-grown peony, and began to be hospitable.

He wanted to know if I was an Odd Fellow. I told him that I was not a member of any chartered organization of that name.

"Do you smoke?" he queried.

Thinking that possibly he had been inveigled into buying something that did not tip the scales at more than eight dollars per thousand, I returned his proposition as unavailable.

He seemed very much pleased at this, and

warily drawing from about him somewhere a chocolate-hued wand of swamp-willow leaves, he struck fire and soon hypnotized the car with fumes of odoriferous gas. An old lady sitting behind us observed that our clothes must be burning, but my friend smoked his sugar-cured weed without flinching. The conductor, however, threatened to stop the train, so the cigar went out.

"How are you on the silver question?" he asked, as he flecked a speck from his pale green trousers.

"Busted," I remarked with the air of a man who appreciates the fact that brevity is the soul of wit.

"Do you know, sir?" he remarked, with a dreamy look and a simultaneous Delsarte movement of the arm, "that I am keenly alive to the beauties of nature; every petal tells its story; every leaf whispers its lesson; and as the evening zephyrs gently waft sweet perfume toward me I feel that nature is indeed kind to let us view her in all of her glory, and I am intoxicated with joy——"

"R-u-m——*joy*."

"Were you ever in Egypt?" he ventured.

"Egypt; oh, yes; went there on a basket picnic once; Sunday school party."

"A basket picnic," he gasped.

"Yes, we had quite a jolly time; I left my wife at home. Great place, that Egypt, for pine burrs and redbugs. I remember we had gooseberry pie for lunch."

"Heavens! Say, my friend, how did you go?"

"Walked part of the way; then took the 'Elevated.' We cut across the fields and strolled back in the moonlight."

"Are you sure that it was Egypt?"

"Certainly; quite sure; I had a brother-in-law who died out there; he blew out the gas."

I saw him furtively watching me out of the corner of his eye when he thought I was not looking. I pretended not to notice him, but he demanded my attention by thumping briskly on his stiff hat, which he had removed, and tragically repeating,

> *"I am dying, Egypt, dying,*
> *Ebbs the crimson flood away——"*

"Are you a native of Egypt, sir?" I asked innocently.

"No, sir," he snapped.

"I thought probably you had known my brother-in-law there; he was a seal merchant; used to catch seals in the Nile and make sacques."

"A seal catcher in Egypt? *Poor Baron Munchausen!*"

And he took his cigar and went forth to fumigate the train.

THE POETRY CLUB.

THERE had been a great revival of learning in Pathacket. Everybody who could raise the necessary amount had invested it in some work of standard poetry. This, of course, was very commendable in the good people of that town, and, had they gone quietly along and been satisfied with *perusing* the works of great poets, all would have gone well. But most mortals do not know when to let well enough alone. The result of this craze was "The Poetry Club."

It was the original intention of the club that each member should commit to memory one or more verses of poetry each day, and at the regular weekly meeting a general discussion should follow. Everyone in the place lisped in numbers, as did our esteemed friend Pope. Occasionally an individual would walk down the street and accost an old friend with the time-honored sentiment, "Nice morning?" But he

received no hackneyed reply; the answer was something like this:

> *"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,*
> *The bridal of the earth and sky;*
> *The dews shall weep thy fall to-night,*
> *For thou must die."*

Unless the prosaic individual happened to be up with the spirit of the times, this reply would only confuse him and leave great doubt with him as to the sanity of his whilom friend.

Many meetings of the organization were held, and the results were indeed gratifying to its members. Moore, Byron, Scott, Shelley, Burns, Tennyson and the rest were fluently quoted and fairly well understood. But after several meetings it was found that the club had reached a stopping place; all of the choice passages had been thoroughly conned and learned, and there was nothing left to be done. Here was a puzzle. Surely an organization that had been so successful could not cease operations merely because there were "no more worlds to conquer."

However, some of the members, thinking it had outlived its usefulness, decided that the best thing to do was to disband. The meeting which was thought to be the last was attended by all with sad hearts and quivering lips, and the au-

thors so dear to the hearts of the members were longingly quoted, as the members bade them farewell.

Just before the closing ceremonies a cadaverous individual, who had been sitting in the back of the hall, arose and stated that he had a motion which he was anxious to make. The president courteously inclined his head, and the member, Jawdle by name, who had been in Pathacket only a short time, put his motion. He said:

"Considering the fact, Mr. Chairman, that we have about run out of ready-made poetry, I move, sir, that each member get his brain in shape for composing poetry; and that at each meeting hereafter there be appointed a committee of three to furnish poetry of their own manufacture. By this means we might bring to light some 'mute, inglorious Milton.' "

The members opened their eyes very wide indeed when the friend made known his ideas. Not one in the club had ever thought of such a thing before, but now that the brother had proposed it, why, yes, certainly, they could all write verses, and write them well. The gentleman who made the motion said further that in order to show the audience how easy it was to compose, he would quote a sample which he had thought out during the evening—a unique gem.

Of course he received a unanimous request to parade his verses, and with unaffected grace proceeded to do so:

With the aid of the Muse
I seek to amuse
You with some fanciful rhyme;
But I'm sorry to say
My thoughts flew away
To a more poetical clime.

Congratulations were numerous. The contagion spread rapidly and the motion and verse bore fruit. Before the meeting could be adjourned many brows were tightly contracted as if seeking to explore the hidden mysteries of a couplet. Everybody went home thoughtful.

In a few days the town was wild. It was impossible to pick up a piece of paper as large as a man's hand that did not contain the opening line of a saucy lyric or a soul-stirring epic. All the wrapping paper in the village had been poetized upon by the clerks who were members of the organization. It was said that within a week after the adoption of the above plan a certain house in a Northern city sold in Pathacket three hundred rhyming dictionaries, and seventy-five works on synonyms.

At the first meeting under the new régime

the entire population of Pathacket was out. Only three had been appointed to write verses, but they had all tried their pens from the president to the janitor. Their effusions were bits of queerness, accounted for only by the spirit of the organization and the present disposition of its members.

The first appointee was a lovesick young man who read his production in a clear voice, slightly modulated by feeling:

What makes the world go round and round,
And takes us mortals off the ground,
And makes us think to Heaven we're bound?
'Tis Love.

This was heartily applauded, but was robbed of its sting when the next versifier, who was a new woman, read the product of her genius:

Turn backward, turn backward, O, Time, in your flight,
And give us the floor, if just for to-night;
We'll turn the old world so far from her course
That gravity no longer will act as a force.
We'll show you that woman's superior to man;
Just give us a start and catch up if you can.

Hurrahs followed closely upon the wake of

this, and the audience concluded that versification was on the increase. But more was yet to come. Miss Aurelia Styles, when called on, regaled them with something heroic, a soul-thrilling conglomeration:

O, let me to you formulate,
If me you will allow,
'A plan to crown a poet's pate,
To decorate his brow.

First weave a thousand laurels bright,
'An hundred bay twigs bring,
'And fetch a wreath of lilies white
To decorate our king.

Then set him on a royal throne,
'And give him nectar sweet,
And bow ourselves in posture prone
At our poet laureate's feet.

The house was aflame. The music was started; hats were thrown into the air, and for a while pandemonium reigned supreme. When the house cooled down the president announced that the regular exercises were over and the motion for adjournment was in order. This was met with a howl of opposition. Scores of others had prepared verses and were anxious to read them. In vain did the executive officer assure

them that it was impossible for him to hear them all, but his protestations did not count. One old lady, despite the objections and the rulings, jumped upon a bench and read the following obituary:

Here lies a spinster, Margaret Blair,
Whose life was the hardest of all to bear;
Stranger, pause and stroke your chin,
Lest you also are found out by your sin.

This left the assembly very thoughtful, and the weakest of them in tears. But these soon subsided, and the entire hall was filled with shouts for recognition.

Above the din was heard in stentorian tones:

George Washington was a soldier bold,
More than six feet high;
Though bullets often struck him,
He was never known to fall.

A young man with pale hair was at the blackboard savagely writing. His rhyme was pointed:

There was a young lady from Worcester
Who owned a diminutive rorcester,
He got a bad mote
In his tiny wee throte,
And he doesn't crow as loud as he orcester.

The noise was now terrific. Nothing could be heard save an occasional rhyme, intermingled with groans, shouts, sighs and shrieks. It was awful. Suddenly the crowd parted; the mob gave way; for up the aisle, with loose garments and wildly flowing hair, ran Major Pepper, an old man who had not mingled with the people for years. He reached the platform with a bound and faced the audience with piercing eyes. With a majestic wave of the hand, he paused for a moment, and then rolled forth:

"A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,"

A unanimous scream of derision stopped him. The lights were instantly extinguished and the members groped home in the darkness.

The Poetry Club was no more.

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